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WELFARE OF FAMILIES OF SUGAR-BEET LABORERS

A Study of Child Labor and Its Relation to Family Work, Income, and Living Conditions in 1935

Bureau Publication No. 247
CHILDREN'S BUREAU
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary
CHILDREN'S BUREAU . . . KATHARINE F. LENROOT, Chief

WELFARE OF FAMILIES OF SUGAR-BEET LABORERS

A Study of Child Labor and Its Relation to Family Work, Income, and Living Conditions in 1935

BY

ELIZABETH S. JOHNSON

Bureau Publication No. 247

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CONTENTS

	Page
Letter of transmittal	v
The problem	1
Summary of findings	3
Scope and method of study	6
The sugar-beet industry	9
Hand-labor operations	9
The labor-contract system	10
Labor migration	11
Characteristics of the families of sugar-beet laborers	13
Racial stock	13
Residence and migration	14
Previous experience in beet work	15
Employment relation to growers	15
Size and composition of families	16
Work of children in the sugar-beet fields	19
Background of child labor in the industry	19
Attitudes toward work of children	20
Methods of identifying child workers	22
Ages of working children	24
Proportion working, by age	24
Area differences in observance of 14-year minimum-age standard	26
Effect of 14-year minimum-age standard—1934 and 1935 compared	27
Work performed by children	29
The processes at which children worked	29
Daily hours of work	31
Length of working periods	35
Problems of effectuating compliance with child-labor standards	36
Interference of beet work with the schooling of children	41
School enrollment and absence	42
Application of compulsory-school-attendance standards	46
Special classes and modified school terms for beet workers' children	49
School progress	51
Family work and income	54
Amount of families' work in the beet fields	54
Duration of work in beet fields	54
Acreage handled	56
Differences in acreage worked per family and in use of hired help, 1934 and 1935	58
Wage rates	60
Earnings for beet work	61
Family earnings	61
Individual earnings	63
Supplementary work and income	64
Total income	67
Relief and use of credit	69
Methods of wage payment	69
Store credit	69
Relief	70
Living conditions	73
Food	73
Housing	76
Type	76
Overcrowding	76
Costs	77
Sanitation and water supply	78

Living conditions—Continued. Page
Care and health of children 79
Position in the community 80
Conclusion 82
Appendix I.—Tables 85
Appendix II.—Labor provisions of the Jones-Costigan Act and of the sugar-beet production-adjustment contracts authorized by it 96
Appendix III.—Form used for labor contract between grower and beet laborer in the factory districts of one sugar company 98

ILLUSTRATIONS

Page
Girl topping beets Frontispiece
Acreage of sugar beets in the United States and location of areas visited 7
Family of Mexican beet workers Facing 76
New housing for families of beet laborers constructed by a sugar company Facing 77
Shacks occupied by migratory beet laborers Facing 77

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

United States Department of Labor,
Children's Bureau,
Washington, May 15, 1939.

Madam: There is transmitted herewith Welfare of Families of Sugar-Beet Laborers, the report of a study of conditions among families of sugar-beet laborers made in 1935, the year in which labor provisions were first applied to the production of sugar beets through the contracts of the agricultural-adjustment program. It is the second study made by the Children's Bureau of the conditions of children in the families of sugar-beet workers and of the effects of the family occupation on their welfare. The earlier study, reportd in Bureau Publication No. 115, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, was made in 1920, when there was substantially no regulation of labor conditions in sugar-beet fields.

The Children's Bureau is indebted to representatives of sugar companies, of growers' associations, of labor organizations, of schools and social agencies, as well as to the individual families of beet laborers, for their cooperation and assistance in making available information on which this report is based. Special acknowledgment is due to officials of the Sugar Section and of the Tenure and Labor Relations Sections of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration for the advice and assistance which they have contributed.

The study was planned and carried on under the general direction of Beatrice McConnell, Director of the Industrial Division of the Bureau. The field work was conducted by Elizabeth S. Johnson, Ruth Scandrett, Josephine Streit, Virginia Weston, Rosalie Williams, Helen Wood, and Mary Zahrobsky, under the supervision of Mary Skinner. The report was written by Elizabeth S. Johnson.

Respectfully submitted.

Katharine F. Lenroot, *Chief.*

Hon. Frances Perkins,
Secretary of Labor.

Farm Security Administration photograph by Lee.

Girl topping beets.

Welfare of Families of Sugar-Beet Laborers

THE PROBLEM

Families of sugar-beet laborers are largely dependent for their livelihood on wages for work performed in the sugar-beet fields at scattered periods during 6 or 7 months of the year. Children labor beside their parents in the attempt of the family to earn enough during the comparatively brief working season to provide a living for the family throughout the year. The effort to earn a living in this seasonal industry exacts long hours of arduous labor from young and old. It frequently involves the children's absence from school and thus contributes to their retarded educational progress and handicaps their social adjustment. Despite these sacrifices of family well-being in the performance of hand labor necessary for the production of a beet crop, the working families are often unable to earn from their beet labor, supplemented by whatever other employment may be available to them, enough money to provide for their maintenance. During and since the depression, reduced wage rates and lessened opportunities for supplementary employment have caused many families of beet workers to resort to relief. Withal, they are inadequately fed, poorly housed, ill provided with medical care, and deprived of the means of satisfying other primary needs.

These families are a group in which the relationship of the family occupation to the welfare of the children is particularly close. The problems of the welfare of their children cannot be understood or solved without reference to the family occupation and income. Not only has the occupation of the father become the family occupation, but the stability necessary for the child's sense of security is often interfered with by the necessity for continually moving from place to place in order to obtain work and a place to live.

So acute were the conditions of beet laborers' families following the reduction in wage rates in the period from 1931 to 1933, and so pressing the burden of their support that fell upon public agencies in 1933 and 1934, that when sugar beets were made subject to the Agricultural Adjustment Act it was provided for the first time that production-adjustment contracts made between the growers and the Government might contain provisions making the payment of Government benefits to the growers dependent upon the observance of certain labor practices with respect to wages and to child labor.

This amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act, known as the Jones-Costigan Act of 1934,[1] provided for sugar quotas and marketing allotments, for a processing tax on sugar, and for benefits to growers making contracts with the Government regarding the production of sugar beets. These contracts governing sugar-beet production and

[1] Public, No. 213, 73d Cong.

providing for benefit payments under this act stipulated in 1935 that the grower pay in full the wages due persons employed in the production of the crop, that in districts for which the Secretary of Agriculture set minimum wages for labor on the beet crop the grower pay not less than the established rate, and that the grower accept the decision of the Secretary of Agriculture in the adjudication of any labor dispute.[2] The contracts also provided in 1935 that no children under 14 years of age should be employed in the production of sugar beets and that no children between 14 and 16 years of age should be permitted to work longer than 8 hours a day, exception being made, however, for children in the growers' own families working on their parents' farms. Such children were exempted from the application of both child-labor provisions.

In order to provide a factual basis for a constructive consideration of the problems of families of sugar-beet laborers and to ascertain the effects of the child-labor and wage provisions of the Jones-Costigan Act on the families for whose benefit these provisions were established, the Children's Bureau undertook, in 1935, this survey of conditions among the families of sugar-beet laborers. In undertaking this study it was hoped that the findings would be helpful in the administration of the production-adjustment contracts made between growers of sugar beets and the Government as well as in the future consideration of labor standards for other agricultural work. Although the production-adjustment contracts of the Jones-Costigan Act were invalidated early in 1936, the findings are still pertinent and can serve a similar purpose in connection with the administration of the Sugar Act of 1937, which establishes a sugar-quota program and provides benefit payments to sugar-beet growers that are conditional on the observance of child-labor and wage standards similar to those embodied in the production-adjustment contracts of the Jones-Costigan Act of 1934.

[2] Sugar Beet Production Adjustment Contract (Form Sugar 3), U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, approved October 16, 1934. Text of labor provisions appears in Appendix II, p. 96.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study of a group of families shows clearly the gravity of the problems that field workers of the sugar-beet industry face, involving both themselves and their children. The following brief summary of the outstanding factual findings of the survey makes apparent the importance of child-labor standards and wage standards in this agricultural industry. It concerns the characteristics of the families that work in the beet fields, the work and school attendance of the children, and the work, income, and living conditions of the families.

Scope of study.—The study is based chiefly on interviews with 946 families of sugar-beet laborers in the fall and early winter of 1935, the first year in which labor provisions were included in the production-control contracts under the sugar-beet benefit program authorized by the Jones-Costigan Act. Each family interviewed performed hand labor in sugar-beet fields in that year and each had at least one child under 16 years of age. These families worked in 10 beet-growing areas in 6 States (Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana) and comprised, it is believed, a representative group of families of hired beet laborers from areas where hired family labor is characteristic of the industry.

Race and nationality.—In the majority of the families (67 percent) the head of the household was either Mexican or Spanish-American (a native-born person of Spanish, Mexican, or Indian origin, whose forebears were Spanish-speaking and lived in Mexico or the southwestern part of the United States). The second most important group of families identified by language and nationality stock was the Russian-German, comprising 22 percent of those interviewed. The remaining 11 percent with various other racial backgrounds were about equally divided between those with foreign-born fathers and those whose fathers were native born.

Migration.—Fifty-nine percent of the 946 families were nonmigratory and 41 percent migratory, moving onto the beet farms for the working season and leaving for the winter. This 41 percent comprised 28 percent moving within the immediate beet-growing area in which they worked and 13 percent migrating from outside that area.

Size of families.—The families of the beet laborers tended to be large, almost half having seven or more members. In more than half the families three or more members worked in the beet fields.

Child labor.—In the families of the beet laborers interviewed 670 children between 6 and 16 years of age were reported as working in the beet fields in 1935, and these children numbered about one-fourth of all the family members that did beet labor in that year. Of these 670 working children, 280 were known to be under 14 years of age and they comprised 19 percent of all children of the age group 6 and under 14 years in the families. Information obtained from these families regarding the work of children in 1934, prior to the establishment of the 14-year minimum age under the contracts, showed that a

marked reduction in the proportion working had occurred in 1935 with the application of the minimum-age standard. Altogether 43 percent of the children 6 and under 14 years of age were reported to have worked in the beet fields in 1934. The decrease between the 2 years in the proportion working was most marked for the group of children aged 6 and under 12 years, 28 percent of the children of these ages working in 1934 and 9 percent in 1935. A less marked decrease occurred for children 12 and under 14 years of age, the group just under the minimum-age limit. Of this age group 83 percent worked in 1934 and 50 percent in 1935.

Hours of children's work.—Despite the 8-hour maximum workday established under the Government contracts for 14- and 15-year-old children, more than half of the working children under 16 years of age were reported to have worked usually for longer than 8 hours a day in the beet fields. When engaged in thinning the beets, the first process of the season and that at which hours tended to be longest, a fourth of the children were reported to have worked usually 12 or more hours a day.

School attendance and school progress.—In these families of beet laborers only two-thirds of all the 2,014 children that were between 6 and 16 years of age on September 1, 1935, enrolled in school or were expecting to enroll before the end of the 1935 harvest season; more than a fifth delayed enrollment until after the harvest was completed; and nearly one-tenth had not enrolled by the time of interview and were not expecting to enroll during the ensuing school year. Slightly more than half of all the children between 8 and 16 years of age that had enrolled in school or were about to enroll were retarded or overage for their grades; and nearly three-fourths of the children 15 years of age that were still in school were retarded.

Family earnings for beet labor.—The family incomes were very low. Average (median) earnings for beet work for the entire season were $340 per family for 374 families interviewed after they knew the amount of their entire earnings for work on the 1935 beet crop. These families all worked in Michigan, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Montana. The yearly earnings for this group of families were less than $200 per family for 29 percent and $600 or more for only 22 percent. Considering only the 311 families among these that had worked at all processes during the season, the average (median) yearly earnings were $410.

Supplementary work and income.—Seven-eighths of the families interviewed in all 10 areas obtained at least a little supplementary work and income during the course of the year; but the amounts of supplementary income for those that had such income amounted to an average (median) of only $51 in the year, exclusive of relief. Less than a third reported supplementary money income of $100 or more in the year. Including such supplementary income, the average (median) total yearly income, exclusive of relief, was $430 for the 343 families reporting in the areas visited in Michigan, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Montana, an average (median) of about $75 a year per family member.

Relief.—Support from relief funds was received by 63 percent of the families interviewed in all 10 areas during the period from November 1, 1934, to October 31, 1935, or to the date of interview if earlier. Many families (36 percent) were on relief rolls by the end of December

1934, for they had little if any money left to buy supplies for the winter after the harvest pay check had met the storekeepers' bills for necessities purchased during the working season.

Living conditions.—Along with meager family incomes and the frequent need for assistance from relief agencies went poor living conditions involving inadequate diet, insufficient clothing, poor housing, and lack of needed medical service for most of the families. Their dwellings were frequently in poor repair. Forty-seven percent of the families reporting on their dwellings during the beet season lived in houses of not more than two rooms. Nearly two-fifths were living with 3 or more persons to a room, and a few were living with 6 to 10 persons to a room.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF STUDY

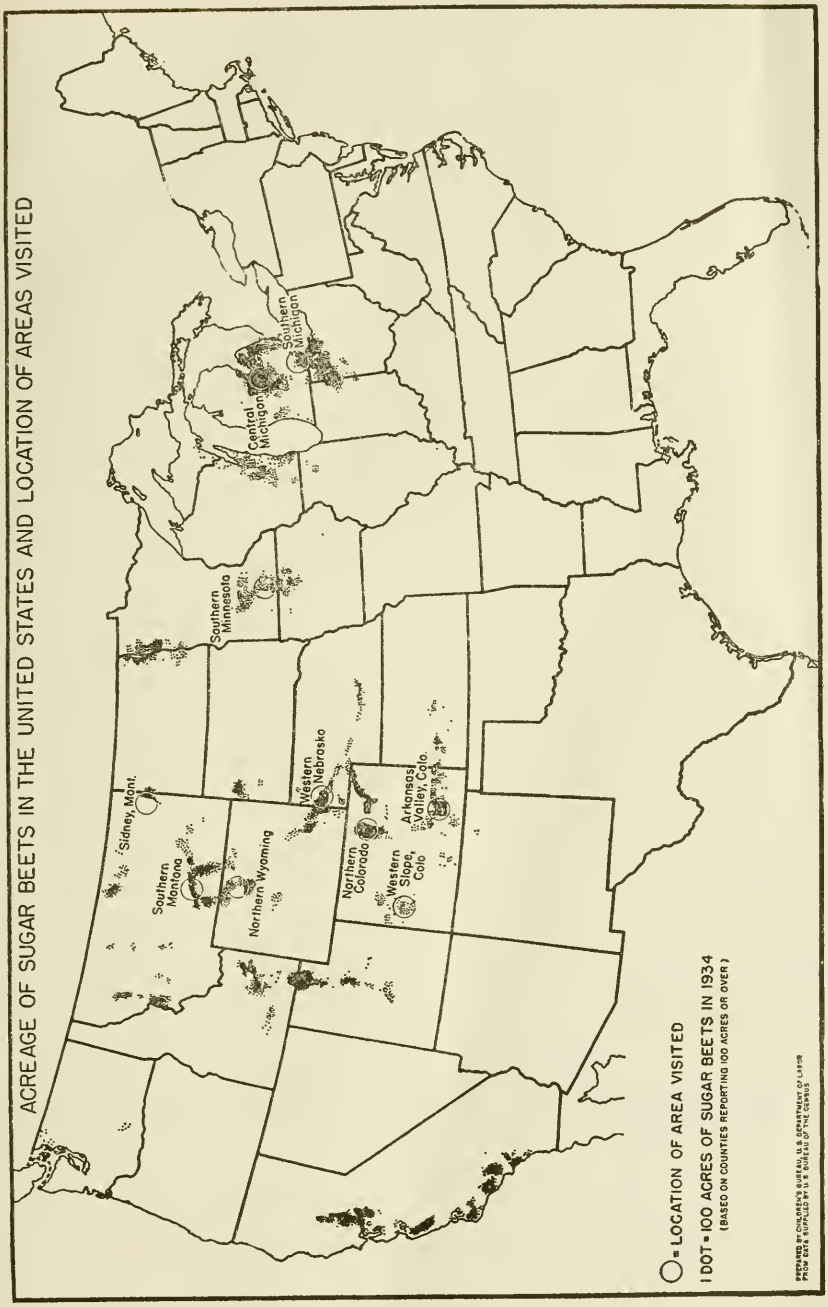
This study of the welfare of the families of sugar-beet laborers is based chiefly on interviews by representatives of the Children's Bureau with 946 families of sugar-beet laborers. It is concerned with work in the beet fields by children and their parents, with the school attendance of the children, with the amount of beet work done by the family groups, with their income from beet work and other sources, with whether they received relief, with their migration, and with their living conditions. The information on the families' personal situations has been supplemented by information on the local characteristics of the industry and on the communities visited, obtained from persons connected with various organizations in the regions visited. These included representatives of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, State departments of labor, education, and welfare, sugar-beet processing companies, associations of sugar-beet growers, labor organizations, schools, and also representatives of relief, health, and other social agencies. Numerous individual beet growers were also consulted.

The 946 families of sugar-beet laborers on which the statistical findings of this study are based comprise sample groups of families from three areas in the eastern beet region and from seven in the Mountain States beet region. The areas visited and the number of families interviewed that worked in each are as follows:

	Number of families
Eastern beet region:	
Central Michigan	115
Southern Michigan	42
Southern Minnesota	75
Mountain States beet region:	
Northern Colorado	193
Arkansas Valley, Colo	70
Western Slope, Colo	51
Western Nebraska [1]	102
Northern Wyoming	151
Southern Montana	90
Sidney, Mont	57

[1] In accordance with usage in the industry, western Nebraska is considered part of the Mountain States beet region.

One or more factory districts in each of these areas were visited, a factory district being that unit in a beet-growing region from which all the sugar beets grown are sent to one factory for processing. The location of each of the 10 areas visited is shown on the map on page 7. The names of each factory district and of each county visited within each of the 10 areas appear in appendix table I (p. 85). The areas included in the study were selected after consultation with officials of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and with representatives of the sugar-processing companies as being characteristic of the beet regions in which laborers in family groups customarily do the hand


ACREAGE OF SUGAR BEETS IN THE UNITED STATES AND LOCATION OF AREAS VISITED
Sidney, Mont.
Southern Montana
Northern Wyoming
Western Nebraska
Northern Colorado
Western Slope, Colo.
Arkansas Valley, Colo.
Southern Minnesota
Central Michigan
Southern Michigan
= LOCATION OF AREA VISITED
1 DOT = 100 ACRES OF SUGAR BEETS IN 1934
(BASED ON COUNTIES REPORTING 100 ACRES OR OVER)

labor in the sugar-beet fields. The Pacific coast beet region, where the laborers in the beet fields are reported to be chiefly unattached men, is not represented in this study.

Within each of the 10 areas visited a preliminary survey of the characteristics of the beet-working population and of the places where various groups lived was made by the representatives of the Children's Bureau with the assistance of persons in the localities who were thoroughly familiar with the industry and the beet-laboring population. On the basis of such a survey certain rural sections, colonies, villages, and parts of towns were selected for intensive coverage as representative of the areas. In such selected places every household of beet laborers along each road or street was visited.

The study is limited to those families in which at least one adult did hand labor in the beet fields for hire in 1935, and because emphasis was placed on family and child welfare, the study is also limited to those in which at least one child under 16 years of age on June 15, 1935, was part of the household during the working season. No family that operated a farm in 1935 was included, even though the members also performed beet labor for hire. It is believed that the 946 families included in the study are representative of such families in areas where beet-field labor is characteristically done by family workers. In considering the findings of this study, especially with respect to size of families, amount of work performed, and earnings, it should be borne in mind, however, that families without children under 16 have been excluded.

The field visits in the selected areas were made between early September and late December 1935. The Colorado areas were visited before the harvest work began; western Nebraska during the height of the harvest season; northern Wyoming at the end of the harvest season; the Montana area after practically all harvest work was completed; and the Minnesota and Michigan areas after all harvest work was completed. The selection of families visited was unavoidably influenced by the migration of some families to winter quarters. In Minnesota all the families included in the study were interviewed in Minneapolis and St. Paul since most of the beet workers from the southern Minnesota beet-growing localities had already moved to these cities for the winter. In Michigan the families included in the study were visited in several rural beet-growing localities, where the families were remaining through the winter, and in the city of Saginaw, where a sugar factory is located. Some beet workers lived in Saginaw the year around and others lived on nearby farms during the summer beet season and moved into the city for the winter. In this way both migratory and nonmigratory families were included for Michigan, but not those families that left the State immediately after the completion of the harvest work.

THE SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY

The production of sugar beets and the manufacture of beet sugar are comparatively new industries in the United States, their rapid expansion having occurred in the first 20 years of the present century. In 1935 approximately 1,200,000 tons of sugar, nearly one-fourth of the total amount of sugar consumed in the United States, including cane sugar, were made from the 7,900,000 tons of sugar beets produced in this country.

Sugar beets are a cash crop raised by farmers under contract with sugar-beet processing companies. The localities that produce sugar beets extend from Ohio to California, and in 1935 were concentrated around the 76 sugar-beet processing factories which were operated that year by 27 companies. The localities in the United States where sugar beets are grown lie in three regions: (1) The eastern beet region, comprising the Middle Western States of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and so forth; (2) the Mountain States beet region, from southern Colorado to Montana and from Nebraska to Idaho, where beets are grown in irrigated valleys; and (3) the Pacific coast region, where beets are also an irrigated crop. Chief sugar-beet-producing States in each region are Michigan in the eastern beet region; Colorado in the Mountain States beet region; and California on the Pacific coast. Colorado is the most important beet-producing State with about one-fifth of the entire sugar-beet acreage of the United States.

In 1935 the 76 factories processing sugar beets were supplied by approximately 75,000 growers with beets harvested from 763,000 acres of land, an average of about 10 acres of beets for each operator. The best available indication of the number of persons performing the hand-labor operations on the total acreage in beets in the United States is an estimate for 1933, at which time the number of workers involved was estimated to be approximately 160,000, including both hired workers and members of farmers' families.[1]

This report is concerned only with the agricultural industry of sugar-beet production and not with the processing industry, which manufactures sugar from sugar beets.

HAND-LABOR OPERATIONS

Labor requirements in the beet fields involve several hand-labor operations peculiar to sugar-beet production in addition to the work of plowing, planting, and mechanical cultivation usual for other crops. The hand-labor operations must be performed during short periods scattered over about 6 months of the year. The first hand-labor process of the season consists of blocking and thinning the young sugar-beet plants that come up very thickly from seed planted in

[1] Report for the Committee on Labor Conditions in the Growing of Sugar Beets, by W. Lewis Abbott, p. iii. Washington, March 1934. (Mimeographed.)

rows. These operations taken together are referred to as the thinning process in this report. The hand worker removes a group of the small plants with the use of a short-handled hoe and then thins out the resulting bunches of beets in the row with his fingers so that one strong plant remains from each bunch. The plants left standing are usually spaced about 10 inches apart. This work, which usually lasts 3 to 5 weeks during the latter part of May and much of June,[2] must be done before the plants become too large and crowded.

The second hand operation is hoeing, also called weeding, which is begun immediately after the thinning is completed. Although a strip of soil between the rows is cultivated by machinery, the cultivation close to the beet plants must be done by hand. In many areas a second hoeing and occasionally a third is required. This cultivation is usually completed by early August. No hand work is then done on the crop until the harvesting of the beets, which requires another period of intensive work of 3 to 5 weeks, usually in October and early November. The hand labor at this time consists of pulling the beets from the soil, which has been loosened by a horse-drawn lifter, knocking the beets together to remove the adhering soil, and throwing them in piles. The leaves and crown of the beets are then cut from the root by the use of a large, specially designed knife. The harvesting work of pulling and topping, which operations are together referred to as the topping process in this report, is telescoped into a few weeks in order that the beets may remain in the ground as long as possible to secure the maximum sugar content and yet may be harvested before they are frozen into the ground.

According to the workers' reports, the hand-labor operations in the beet fields as performed in the thinning and in the topping process are two of the most arduous types of agricultural labor because of the necessity for almost constant kneeling or stooping over the rows of plants. The pressure for speed and the exposure to the hot sun in the early summer and to cold and disagreeable weather in the late fall add to the fatiguing and trying nature of the work. The hoeing and weeding process is performed in substantially the same manner as on other farm crops, and, though hard, is considered less trying than the thinning and topping work.

THE LABOR-CONTRACT SYSTEM

So seasonal and time consuming are the hand-labor requirements of beet raising that farmers usually find it necessary to hire extra labor to do the hand work. The required hand-labor operations on at least three-fourths of the total acreage of sugar beets grown in the United States are performed by hired laborers.[3]

The usual method of hiring labor for the hand work in the beet fields is by the use of seasonal labor contracts made between grower and laborer for the performance of hand-labor operations only. After contracting with the sugar company of the district for the purchase of the crop of beets on a specified acreage, the grower makes a contract with a laborer for the performance of the hand work on all or a portion of the acreage of sugar beets which the grower plants. This

[2] The months here stated for the various processes apply for most beet-producing localities except those in California, where the operations are performed earlier in the year.

[3] Report for the Committee on Labor Conditions in the Growing of Sugar Beets, p. 2.

contract with the laborer specifies the manner in which the work shall be done, the rate of wages per acre, and the time of payment. A labor contract may cover only one or two hand-labor operations, as is customary in California, where solo labor predominates; but it is more likely to cover all the hand-labor operations of the season, the usual type of contract in all the areas visited for this study where family labor was characteristic.

Where family labor is used under a labor contract the working group is composed typically of the members of one family but may include members of two or more families. Sometimes two or more families contract jointly for the work and share responsibility. Sometimes a second family may be hired as extra help by the contracting family; but in this case the family so hired is likely to be paid the same wage rate as the contracting family is paid by the grower. The contracting family also may hire unattached or solo workers as extra help. The labor-contract system lends itself particularly to the use of the labor of wives and children. The father of a family relies on the labor of his wife or children or both in order to handle as many acres as possible in an effort to support his family at the wages paid. It is thought by many that the widespread use of the labor of women and children in the families has a depressing effect on wage rates paid for this type of work, because it is not expected that most families would be able to support themselves if only the father and grown children worked in the beet fields.

An important advantage to the industry of the labor-contract system is the assurance of a sufficient supply of hand labor through all the scattered work periods of the season. A distinct preference for family labor has developed in many places, due in part to the fact that men with families are considered more reliable and more likely to see the work through to completion than solo workers.

The total number of persons performing beet work under the labor-contract system has been roughly estimated for the year 1933 as approximately 110,000, of whom about 80,000 were men, about 15,000 women, and about 15,000 children under 16 years of age.[4]

LABOR MIGRATION

The seasonal demand for labor has made labor recruiting and seasonal migration of labor important features of the industry, which vitally affect family welfare. As the sugar-beet industry developed and expanded thousands of laborers, usually family groups, were annually recruited and transported into beet-growing localities by the sugar-processing companies to provide the work force needed to perform the hand labor in the beet fields. These families sometimes returned after the harvest to the homes they had left in the spring, but there has been an increasing tendency over a period of years for the families to remain in the beet-growing localities over the winter and indeed to settle there. This trend has been encouraged by the sugar companies, since the annual recruiting and shipping of labor is expensive. Important recruiting centers for beet workers have

[4] Ham, William T.: Regulation of Labour Conditions in Sugar Cultivation Under the Agricultural Adjustment Act. International Labour Review, Geneva, vol. 33, No. 1 (January 1936), p. 76. (These figures are rough estimates of numbers of contract workers based on reports to U. S. Tariff Commission from sugar-manufacturing companies. They do not include persons hired on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis by the farm operator and assigned to hand labor in the beet fields.)

been Lincoln, Nebr., the center of a large Russian-German population, and various centers in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas with large populations of Spanish-speaking persons, some of Mexican and some of American birth. Prior to present immigration restrictions, many of the families came from Mexico. After 1930, when unemployment was increasing, labor recruiting declined, and in 1935 it was relatively unimportant, since large numbers of beet workers were on hand in the beet-growing localities the year around, and some had migrated for beet work on their own initiative.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAMILIES OF SUGAR-BEET LABORERS

Beet laborers are a distinctive group in the agricultural wage-earning population. The 946 families included in this study were almost all of Mexican-Indian or other foreign extraction. The families tended to be large. The vast majority had done hand labor in sugar-beet fields for a number of years and relied on such work for their livelihood. A sizeable minority were migrants in the sense that they lived in a different place during the winter than during the working season. The labor policies of the industry have tended to bring about a selection of families with these characteristics.

RACIAL STOCK

The racial stock of the father or other head of the family was either Mexican or Spanish-American in two-thirds of the families reporting. The proportion of families in which the head of the household was Mexican-born was 48 percent. The proportion of families in which the head of the household was Spanish-American, that is, a native-born person of Spanish, Indian, or Mexican origin, whose forebears were Spanish speaking and lived in Mexico or the Southwestern States of the United States, was 19 percent of all families interviewed. Persons in these two Spanish-speaking groups have many common characteristics. When grouped together the Mexicans and Spanish-Americans will be referred to as Spanish-speaking people in this report. The other important group, identified by the language and nationality stock of the head of the family, was the Russian-German, which comprised 22 percent of the families interviewed. Russian-Germans are persons of German descent who settled in Russia. Many migrated from there to the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century, and it is those immigrants and their children who comprise the group defined as Russian-German in this report. The remaining 11 percent of the families comprised 6 percent whose heads were foreign-born of other nationalities and 5 percent whose heads were native-born. Bohemians, Germans, and Belgians were represented among the 6 percent of foreign-born persons from countries where they may have been accustomed to sugar-beet culture in their youth, as had many of the Russian-German immigrants.

The arduous and fatiguing labor involved in beet work and the comparatively low economic and social status of the beet workers have tended to keep native-born Americans from replacing the foreign-language groups recruited by the industry.

Although the group was very largely of Spanish-speaking or Russian-German stock, the father or other head of the family spoke English in three-fourths of the families interviewed. In slightly less than half the families, however, was it reported that the father could read English. Inability to read English was a definite handicap to a family because labor contracts were almost always printed in English. The

language handicap was greater among the Mexicans than among the other families. Only about one-fifth of the Mexican fathers both spoke and read English, while nearly two-thirds of the Russian-German and about the same proportion of Spanish-American fathers could both speak and read the language.

RESIDENCE AND MIGRATION

Permanent settlement was found to be more characteristic of the beet laborers' families interviewed for this study than seasonal migration. Fifty-nine percent, or 561 of the 946 families interviewed, lived through the winter in the same dwelling as during the working season. Many of these nonmigratory families lived on the farms where they worked (45 percent). A considerable number (31 percent) lived the year round in colonies (that is, in groups of dwellings built especially for beet workers by the sugar companies); and some (23 percent) lived in towns where they provided their own living quarters independently of the farmer employing them or of the sugar company to whom the farmer sold the beets.

Forty-one percent (385) of all the families interviewed were migratory; that is, they lived at the beet farms only during the working season. These families all lived in a different place while working beets in 1935 from that in which they expected to live during the coming winter, or, if uncertain as to their winter plans, from that in which they lived during the preceding winter. Many migratory families, altogether 268, or 28 percent of all families interviewed, had moved only within the beet-growing area where they worked, a distance of perhaps only 5 or 10 miles from the settlement where they had their winter quarters. The change in environment for the children, involving frequently a different school, removal from accustomed social contacts, and a high degree of concentration of the family's interest in the beet-field work made the fact of moving significant in the family's living even though the distance may not have been great. Some 117, or 12 percent of all interviewed, had migrated from places outside the beet-growing area where they worked in 1935. The 385 families that moved either within or from outside the beet-growing area where they worked are grouped together in this report, and for lack of a better name, are called migratory even though some of them were permanently resident in the general area of their beet employment and, though moving from one dwelling to another for the purpose of being near seasonal work, were scarcely migratory in the sense in which the word is often used. The number of families interviewed in each area is shown according to migratory status in appendix table II (p. 85).

The migratory families almost invariably lived on their employers' farms during the working season. Those moving within the area usually spent the winter in colonies or towns among beet workers who dwelt in these settlements the year around, and about half of them returned temporarily to their winter dwellings for the period between the completion of the summer work of hoeing and weeding and the beginning of the harvesting work.

Interstate migration for beet work in the spring of 1935 was reported by only 50, or about 5 percent, of the 946 families included in this study. Half these families expected to remain in the State to

which they had come for beet work and so were considered as nonmigratory at the time of interview and have been so classified in this report. This 5 percent of families migrating across State lines in the spring of 1935, however, probably is below the proportion of all beet workers who were interstate migrants that spring, because a part of the field work of the study was done after migrant families had left the State where they worked, and because a number of areas on the border line between two States were not included in the study. In this connection it may be noted also that in 1935 little recruiting was done by the sugar companies and considerable public opposition to out-of-State labor had developed. Border patrols, for instance, were reported to be refusing admittance to migrants seeking beet work in Colorado. More than half of the 50 families that were interstate migrants in the spring of 1935 had gone to Wyoming. The largest number of interstate migrants coming from a single State were from Colorado, where the acreage of beets planted in 1935 was below normal and where the Spanish-speaking population is large.[1]

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN BEET WORK

Beet laborers are closely attached to their particular occupation, and those experienced in the work customarily return to it year after year as their chief means of livelihood. A large proportion of the families included in this study, 7 out of 8, reported that the father, or other head of the household, had worked at hand labor in the beet fields of the United States for at least 3 years previous to 1935. About half had done beet work in 10 or more previous seasons and more than one-fourth in 15 or more previous seasons. The large number of seasons at beet work frequently reported is accounted for in part by the fact that many fathers had, as children, worked in the beet fields with their parents. Long periods of service were most common among the families of Russian-German stock, nearly one-third of the fathers in this group having worked in the beet fields of the United States for 20 or more years.

The relatively low turn-over in the occupation in 1935 is shown by the fact that the heads of only 3 percent of all the families visited were working in the beet fields for the first time in that year. This small proportion is doubtless to be explained in part by the fact that the acreage of sugar beets grown in several of the States included in the study was substantially less in 1935 than in the preceding few years and in part by the unemployment resulting from the depression.

EMPLOYMENT RELATION TO GROWERS

A labor contract between the head of the family and the beet grower was the basis of the employment relation for 81 percent of the families of beet laborers included in this study. This was a written and signed agreement for two-thirds and an oral agreement for one-third of the families having contracts. Written contracts, the forms for which were provided by the sugar company or beet growers' association of the locality, were used quite generally by the families visited in the

[1] Greater detail on the migration of the families than is included in this report is contained in the preliminary report of the Secretary of Labor to the Senate in response to S. Res. 298, 74th Cong., a resolution to make certain investigations concerning the social and economic needs of laborers migrating across State lines.

Mountain States beet region, but by barely a third of the families visited in the eastern beet region.

Families without a contractual agreement with a beet grower for any part of the beet labor performed in the 1935 season comprised 19 percent of the 946 families included in the study. These worked generally as extra help for other laborers who did have contracts with growers. Nearly a fourth (23 percent) of all families interviewed in the Mountain States areas, but only 6 percent in the eastern beet region, worked as extra help. It was much more common among Spanish-speaking families to work as extra help (25 percent) than among Russian-Germans (8 percent). The typical relationship between contract families and the families that were their extra help was one in which the extra help shared on an equal basis with the contracting family in the total wages for the work, division between families being made in proportion to the number of persons and working time credited to each family. Beet work was done only on the basis of a daily wage by 23 of the families working as extra help. These were usually hired for short periods only and were nearly always paid by a contract worker rather than directly by a grower, although the grower probably had required that the extra worker be hired.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF FAMILIES

The families of the beet workers were found in general to be large, to have several children who were under 16 years of age, and to average a large number of workers per family. Nearly one-third of all the families visited had eight or more members living together as an economic unit, exclusive of boarders or other families living in the same dwelling; only one-fourth had four or fewer members. The beet workers' families were distinctly larger than the average for rural families in the United States, the median number of persons per family of beet workers included in this study being 6.2, contrasted with a median of 4.5 for all rural families in the United States having three or more members.[2]

TABLE 1.—*Number of persons in families of beet-field laborers, 1935*

Number in family [1]	Number of families		Number in family [1]	Number of families	
	Total	Percent distribution		Total	Percent distribution
Total families	946	100.0	7 persons	134	14.2
			8 persons	100	10.6
2 persons	3	.3	9 persons	80	8.5
3 persons	106	11.2	10 persons	51	5.4
4 persons	139	14.7	11 persons	36	3.8
5 persons	131	13.8	12 or more persons	26	2.7
6 persons	140	14.8			

[1] On June 15, 1935.

The fact that there are many large families among beet workers results to some extent from the recruiting and employment policies of the industry under which families with several children old enough to

[2] Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population, vol. 6, Families, pp. 7, 14–15.

help with the beet work have been preferred to smaller families or to those with no children old enough to work in the fields.

The total number of persons comprising the membership of the 946 families of beet laborers that were interviewed for this study was 6,071 as of June 15, 1935. Slightly over half, or 3,231, of these were children known to be under 16 years of age; and approximately one-fifth, or 1,199, were children known to be under 6 years of age. It is with these children, who are representative of all children whose families work in the beet fields, that the Children's Bureau is chiefly concerned in this study.

There was some difference in family size and composition between the Spanish-speaking families, with an average of 6.3 members, and the families of Russian-German stock, with an average of 7.1 members. The age composition of the families was somewhat different, the Spanish-speaking families tending to have more children under 6 years of age (1.5 average per family) than the Russian-German families (0.9 average per family). The Russian-Germans, on the other hand, tended to have a few more members between 6 and 16 years per family and also more members per family 16 years of age and over than did the Spanish-speaking families. It will be shown later that this difference in family composition had a marked influence on the amount of work performed and on the incomes of the families in these two groups.

TABLE 2.—*Age and composition of families of beet laborers, 1935*

Age and composition of family [1]	Number of persons in—							
	All families (946)		Spanish-speaking families (630)		Russian-German families (207)		Other families (109)	
	Total	Average per family	Total	Average per family	Total	Average per family	Total	Average per family
Total members	6,071	6.4	3,997	6.3	1,460	7.1	614	5.6
16 years and over	2,832	3.0	1,776	2.8	735	3.6	321	2.9
Father	901	1.0	606	1.0	196	1.0	99	.9
Mother	908	1.0	602	.9	201	1.0	105	.9
Others	1,023	1.0	568	.9	338	1.6	117	1.1
Under 16 years	3,231	3.4	2,213	3.5	725	3.5	293	2.7
6 years, under 16	2,004	2.1	1,266	2.0	531	2.6	207	1.9
Under 6	1,199	1.3	925	1.5	188	.9	86	.8
5 or 6 years	28	(2)	22	(2)	6	(2)	----	----
15 or 16 years	8	(2)	8	(2)	----	----	----	----

[1] On June 15, 1935.
[2] Less than 1/10 per family.

Large as the families of beet laborers often were, a characteristic at least of those included in this study is that the number of working members tended to be high in relation to the dependent nonworkers. More than half the families had had three or more members working in the beet fields in 1935, although a significant minority (24 percent) had only one beet worker. It may be pointed out by way of contrast that the one-worker family is typical of urban families of wage earners and clerical workers, according to recent studies of family

income and expenditures made by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

TABLE 3.—*Number of beet workers in family, 1935*

Number of beet workers in family	Number of families		Number of beet workers in family	Number of families	
	Total	Percent distribution		Total	Percent distribution
Total families	946	100.0	3	164	17.3
			4	152	16.1
1	227	24.0	5	107	11.3
2	212	22.4	6 or more	84	8.9

The number of persons in the 946 families who worked in the beet fields in 1935 totaled 2,830, as follows:

	Number	*Percent distribution*
Total	2,830	100.0
Father, or other male head of family	854	30.2
Mother, or other female head of family	442	15.6
Other members 16 years of age or over	857	30.3
Children 6 and under 16 years	670	23.7
Children 15 or 16 years	7	.2

It is evident that children comprised a significant part of the labor force drawn from these families, for nearly one-fourth of all beet workers in these families were children under 16 years of age.

The presentation of the findings of the study with respect to child labor and school attendance follow at this point. The problems of low family income and poor living conditions, which in a sense are both cause and result of child labor, will be discussed in a later section of the report.

WORK OF CHILDREN IN THE SUGAR-BEET FIELDS

BACKGROUND OF CHILD LABOR IN THE INDUSTRY

Young children have long been numbered among the hand laborers of the sugar-beet fields wherever the working force has been drawn from family groups. With the pressure upon the families to earn as much as possible in a short working season and in the absence of legal standards for the protection of young children from too early and from excessive labor, too often it has been taken for granted by working parents and employing farmers alike that every member of the laborer's family regardless of age must do whatever he or she possibly can to assist with the field labor by which the family makes its living. Consequences in fatigue and physical strain, in loss of schooling for children, and in lack of normal home and community life have been disregarded. Before the Jones-Costigan Act the legal regulation of child labor in the sugar-beet fields was almost nonexistent in the United States.[1]

In 1920 a survey of child labor in the sugar-beet industry made by the Children's Bureau showed that it was almost universally accepted that young children in beet workers' families labor in the fields with their parents. This survey, made in northern Colorado and central Michigan, showed that about one-tenth of the children 6 years of age, more than half the children 8 years of age, and nearly all the children 10 years of age and over were working in the beet fields.[2] This study was based on 1,053 families doing hand work in the raising of sugar beets, in which children under 16 years of age, or mothers of children under 6 years, performed a part of the work. In these families there were 2,531 children between 6 and 16 years of age, of whom 1,836, or 73 percent, worked in the beet fields that year.

Occasional reference to this earlier study is made to suggest comparison of conditions in 1935 with those in 1920. It should be pointed out, however, that the findings of the 1920 study are not statistically comparable with those of the present study, because the earlier study is not based on the same type of family as the 1935 survey. The base of the earlier study was narrower in one respect—that is, only families of beet workers with working mothers of young children or with working children under 16 years of age were included, rather than all families of beet workers with children under 16, regardless of the work of women and children. It was on a broader base, however,

[1] In Nebraska, which was included in the study, the State child-labor law has since 1907 applied the 8-hour-maximum workday to employment of children under 16 years of age in beet fields, although there has been no program for the enforcement of the 8-hour provision as it applied specifically to sugar-beet work. In Wisconsin, which was not included in the scope of the study, an order of the industrial commission of the State, issued in 1926, provided for some control of child labor in the sugar-beet fields through school-attendance requirements and an 8-hour-day limitation, both of which affected only children under 14 years of age and which imposed duties on the parents but not on the growers. In a number of beet-growing States the child-labor law applies a minimum age to the work of children in any service or occupation; but the application of these laws to work in the sugar-beet fields is not specific in the law, and in general practice these provisions have not been interpreted to apply to this work.

[2] Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, pp. 34, 94. Children's Bureau Publication No. 115. Washington, 1923.

in another respect, namely that it included families of farm owners and farm tenants doing hand work in the beet fields as well as laborers hired to do this work. No farm-owner or farm-tenant families were included in the 1935 study. The proportion of children working in 1920, if shown on the base of the 1935 study, would probably have been somewhat smaller than that reported.

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK OF CHILDREN

With a background of general acceptance of child labor in beet-growing localities, the establishment of child-labor standards for the industry in 1935 by the agricultural-adjustment program called for a change in attitude on the part of many people if the child-labor provisions were to be well observed. The fact that the Government contracts conditioned the payment of financial benefits to growers on observance of the child-labor provisions served in many quarters to stimulate a critical consideration of the use of child labor in the beet fields. When the field work of this study was being carried on in the fall of 1935, after the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts had been in effect for several months, the attitudes of many persons interviewed—growers, workers, and representatives of social agencies—toward the use of child labor were found to be changing, and in many localities the attitudes were very different from those prevailing in 1920. In the Mountain States areas and in southern Michigan the attitude toward the child-labor restriction of the contracts was frequently found to be favorable. In the southern Minnesota and central Michigan areas, however, the common attitude was one of indifference toward the use of young children in the fields and indeed of opposition to the child-labor provisions of the contracts. In general, it may be said that the attitudes of persons in the beet areas visited were frequently favorable to the child-labor provisions of the contracts, but that even in areas where many individuals regarded these provisions favorably full compliance with the child-labor terms did not result from reliance on voluntary action by the growers.

A number of considerations contributed to the favorable attitudes frequently found. The relief officials of one county were expressing the opinion of other persons interviewed when they said that the prohibition of child labor in the beet fields was one of the most valuable social gains under the Jones-Costigan Act and that the standard of living of the Mexicans would be raised and the group would become an integrated part of the community as a result of prohibiting child labor. A few growers supported this point of view, and many favored the elimination of child labor as a help to them in obtaining better-quality work in their fields and as a measure of justice to the children. Growers said: "We pay for mature labor and do not like to get child labor." It was explained, for instance, that at the thinning process children are likely to leave too few or too many beets, to space them poorly, or to leave a less strong plant than they could have left. The telling comment was also made that "we do not like the kids to work because they get tired and then they do not thin well." It was frequently remarked by growers as well as laborers and other persons in the communities visited that children who work in the beet fields are deprived of their full school opportunities and that they valued

the child-labor provisions under the Jones-Costigan Act as a means of helping to keep the children in school.

Despite the immediate hardship experienced by particular families whose children were affected, many laborers approved the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts as a means of increasing work opportunity for adults and of advancing the economic status and general welfare of the workers in this occupation. In southern Michigan the Jones-Costigan Act standards of a 14-year minimum age and an 8-hour maximum workday for children between 14 and 16 years of age were in fact a demand of the beet workers' union in that locality in 1935.

By no means was all local opinion favorable to the new child-labor standards. Some growers, persons representing sugar companies, and others in the communities disapproved of them, saying that the talk of child labor in the beet fields was exaggerated; that the children were not regular in school attendance anyway; that the work they did in the fields was not hard; and that the children would get lazy if they did not start working at 10 or 12 years of age. Such statements were not, however, supported by the facts obtained in this study nor by present-day knowledge of child development.

A more cogent argument advanced by many laborers, representatives of growers and of sugar companies, and even by school teachers, was that the income of the families under present conditions in the industry was so low that a man working alone or even a husband and wife working together could hardly expect to support a family without assistance from their children. Many parents explained that they thought the child-labor standards fair to the children but hard on the man with a big family. "It is pretty good if they gave us a chance to live, but it is hard for some of the large families." There was a definite correlation between the presence of children of 10 to 14 years of age in a family and the attitude of the family toward the child-labor provisions for beet-field work. The families with such children were less likely to favor the provisions than families without them. However, many families that thought their children should work for whatever they could earn said that they wished they could spare their children from the hard work of the fields.

Division of opinion as to whether the children's earnings or the children's protection was more important extended to representatives of relief agencies and of schools. One relief administrator, who heartily approved the value and ultimate economy of eliminating child labor from the beet fields, remarked: "Of course most of the township supervisors think that the children should be allowed to work for what they can earn at the beets and think only of what is paid out now in relief to the specific family."

A number of workers said that the present wage was not high enough to enable parents to support their children and that the rate should be raised so that parents would not feel that they must use their children in order to earn enough to live on. On the other hand, belief that the industry could not afford to support a higher wage level for beet laborers and "pay a man 50 cents an hour" contributed to the critical attitude toward the child-labor provisions on the part of some representatives of the industry.

It was among the Russian-German laborers that the strongest disapproval of the regulation was found, many of them feeling that the work was good training for the children as well as that the children's earnings were essential to family support. One Russian-German father said of his 11-year-old daughter: "Take Mary there. If we do not let her work until she is 14, we might as well knock her on the head and throw her in the ditch. She is lazy now and will never work if she does not start until she is 14. It does not do her any harm. She has worked since she was 6. With Katharine [10] it is not so bad. She is not so lazy; so not working will not do her so much harm."

The provision of the Government contracts specifying an 8-hour day for children between 14 and 16 years of age was approved less often than the 14-year minimum-age provision. While the principle of shorter hours was favored in most localities, the legal limitation of hours of work was thought by many growers to be impractical on the ground that "if a person is going to work he just must work farm hours." Others disapproved of the provision on the ground that it was not fair to require a grower "to police his workers," especially as it was extremely difficult to determine at all times if children were kept off fields that were some distance from the farmer's house.

The sugar-manufacturing companies played an important part in influencing the prevailing attitudes of the growers toward minimum-age and hour standards of the Government contracts and toward their obligation to observe strictly these provisions. Since the growers have been accustomed to accept from the sugar companies supervision of their agricultural practices in the growing of beets and assistance with respect to their labor supply it was only natural that the sugar companies were influential in this matter also. Three sugar companies operating in the areas visited had incorporated a clause in the contract that they made with a grower for the production and purchase of sugar beets to the effect that the grower agreed to comply with the child-labor provisions incorporated in the Government contracts. The sugar-manufacturing companies are deserving of much credit in those areas visited where the prevailing sentiment toward the child-labor provisions of the contracts was favorable and where compliance with them was relatively good, namely southern Michigan and many localities in the Mountain States region.

METHODS OF IDENTIFYING CHILD WORKERS

It has been mentioned that the families interviewed included 670 children under 16 years of age who were working in the beet fields; and the discussion of attitudes toward child labor has indicated that the 14-year minimum-age provision of the Government contracts did not result in the entire exclusion of children under that age from work in the beet fields.

The children under 16 years of age that were reported in this study as working in the beet fields are only those children for whom the Children's Bureau investigators obtained definite information on work done. The chief source of information was the statements of the parents, who for the most part were interviewed in their own homes but occasionally in the fields where they were working. It was not feasible to inspect fields systematically for child labor, partly because many of the interviews were necessarily carried on during the time between working periods and also because less satisfactory inter-

views could be obtained from families when their work was being interrupted than when they were seen at their leisure. No child has been counted as working in the beet fields if the parents said that he worked on only 1 or 2 days in the season or that he worked "only a little," giving no indication as to the number of hours or number of days worked.

Such a method of determining which children were working has undoubtedly resulted in the omission from the count of a few who did work in the fields with some degree of regularity. Reference to one child excluded from the number listed as working illustrates the doubtful cases excluded. A 4-year-old boy was seen by the investigator pulling beets and piling them in rows. The speed and adeptness with which the child handled the beets made it appear that he had had considerable practice at the operation. However, his father and mother, who happened to be interviewed in the field where the whole family was working, denied that this small boy worked more than "a little" and would give no indication that the child worked more than occasionally "for play." Because of uncertainty whether this child's pulling of beets really was more than sport, he was excluded from the number of children considered to be working for the purposes of this study.

"He is really just 13, but for the work he passes for 14." Such comments as this, frequently heard by the investigators during the course of the field work, suggest the ever-present problem of proof of age wherever a minimum age for employment is involved. The fact that the production-adjustment contracts set a 14-year minimum age for work done in the beet fields by hired help made the problem of age determination an immediate one in this survey.

Information obtained for this study on the ages of children was limited to that readily obtainable, since the purpose of the survey was to obtain a picture of working and living conditions of the families rather than to check specifically on compliance with the 14-year minimum-age standard with respect to particular children. The age information for individual children is based chiefly on the mothers' oral statements of date of birth made to the representatives of the Children's Bureau. These statements were corroborated in many cases, however, by documentary evidence such as a birth certificate or a baptismal certificate which the families had at hand. Since no method of age determination had been developed for administrative purposes under the production-adjustment program, no such satisfactory records as employment certificates were available to provide evidence of age. The likelihood of misrepresentation to the Children's Bureau representatives was minimized by obtaining the birth date of each child under 16 without immediate reference to whether the child worked in the beet fields. It was also found helpful to review school records of age, although these could not be thoroughly relied upon, since they were sometimes carelessly collected and were rarely based on documentary evidence. Sometimes different dates of birth would be shown on different records of the same school for the same child; sometimes the date of birth on the school record was inconsistent with the date shown on a birth or baptismal certificate seen by the Children's Bureau representative in the child's home. When such a certificate was seen it was of course used as the basis of the age reported in this study.

The fact that age was not always accurately reported is indicated in the figures on total number of children reported to be of each age in the families. The number reported as 14 years of age was 12 percent greater than the average number of children at 12, 13, and 14 years (table 4). It is thus evident that the number of working children under 14 years shown in this report is probably a slight understatement of the actual number because of errors both in age and in reporting whether a particular child worked. Even so it is believed that the reported number is not grossly out of line with the actual number of such children working in the families interviewed.

AGES OF WORKING CHILDREN

Proportion working, by age.

The year in which this study was made was significant in that it was marked by the application of a Nation-wide legislative restriction on the use of child labor in the beet fields. The study shows that marked changes took place under the influence of the agricultural-adjustment program in the prevalence of the use of young children in the fields as well as in the attitudes of people toward the use of children in the fields.

Among the 946 families included in this study, 748 had, on June 15, 1935, one or more children known to be between 6 and 16 years of age. There was a total of 2,004 children of these ages, of whom 670, or one-third, were reported to be working in the beet fields in 1935. The ages of the working children and of the total number of children between 6 and 16 are shown in table 4, together with the percentage of working children of each year of age.

TABLE 4.—*Percentage working in the beet fields of children 6 and under 16 years of age, by age of child, 1935*

Age of child [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age			Age of child [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age		
	Total	Working in beet fields			Total	Working in beet fields	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
Total	2,004	670	33.4	11 years	191	42	22.0
				12 years	171	65	38.0
6 years	161	2	1.2	13 years	189	116	61.4
7 years	199	2	1.0	14 years	215	194	90.2
8 years	183	8	4.4	15 years	185	168	90.8
9 years	202	21	10.4	6 years, under 16, n. o. s.	113	28	24.8
10 years	195	24	12.3				

[1] Age on June 15, 1935.

The youngest children reported as working in the beet fields were two of 6 years. These two 6-year-old children, however, comprised only 1 percent of all the children of this age in the families. Of the children 10 years of age, 12 percent worked in the fields with their parents. The proportion working increased at each year of age until at 13 years of age the majority of the children were reported as working in the fields. Nearly all of the 14- and 15-year-old children worked.

Both boys and girls "worked at beets," the boys somewhat more frequently than the girls. Of the 670 children between 6 and 16 years of age working in the beet fields, 404 were boys and 266 were girls. This difference is to be accounted for partly because it was sometimes felt that the field work was less suitable for girls and partly because girls were more likely to be assigned duties of housework and of caring for babies and other young children. The higher proportion of boys working was characteristic of all ages under 16 but chiefly of children under 12. The youngest girl reported working was 7 years of age. At 13 years of age the majority of the girls, as well as of the boys, were working in the fields.

The racial stock of the family appeared to have relatively little effect on the prevalence of work by children under 14 years of age in 1935, when a legal minimum-age standard of 14 years was in effect, even though the Russian-Germans were more likely than the Spanish-speaking parents to approve the idea of children working in beet fields. The one point at which there was a noticeable difference between children of Russian-German stock and those from Spanish-speaking families was among children 14 and 15 years of age, especially among girls. In the Russian-German families substantially every girl of these ages worked in the fields as well as every boy; but the girls of 14 and 15 among the Spanish-speaking families were not so universally required to work in the fields.

The migration of the family for beet work appeared to be an important factor in determining whether the younger children worked in the fields. Among children between 6 and 14 years of age in the migratory families, 24 percent were working in the beet fields, whereas for the children of this age group in families that were not migratory the proportion working was 16 percent. The greater prevalence of working children in migratory families was due in part to the greater use of the very young children, the proportion working of those between 6 and 12 years being nearly twice as high for children in migratory as for those in nonmigratory families (table 5).

TABLE 5.—*Percentage working in beet fields of children in migratory and nonmigratory families, by age of child, 1935*

Age of child [1] and migratory status of family	Children 6 and under 16 years of age		
	Total	Working in beet fields	
		Number	Percent
Total children	2,004	670	33.4
In migratory families	824	308	37.4
In nonmigratory families	1,180	362	30.7
6 years, under 12	1,131	99	8.8
In migratory families	452	52	11.5
In nonmigratory families	679	47	6.9
12 years, under 14	360	181	50.3
In migratory families	150	90	60.0
In nonmigratory families	210	91	43.3
14 years, under 16	400	362	90.5
In migratory families	163	150	92.0
In nonmigratory families	237	212	89.5
6 years, under 16, n. o. s.	113	28	24.8

[1] Age on June 15, 1935.

This tendency to greater prevalence of child labor among the young children in migrant families doubtless reflects the fact that families willing to use their children in the fields would have more financial incentive to migrate to the fields than those not wishing to have the children work toward the support of the family. It may be also that children in families living in their year-round home were more established in both home and neighborhood life, and that the children in these families would therefore be more likely to continue their customary home, play, and school activities than if they were put into a new environment where the interests and activities of the family were focused intensely on the beet-field work that was to be done.

Area differences in observance of 14-year minimum-age standard.

The extent to which the 14-year minimum-age provision of the Government contracts was observed was found to differ greatly from area to area. In general there was a greater degree of compliance with the 14-year minimum-age provision of the contracts in the areas of the Mountain States beet region that were visited than in those of the eastern beet region.

For the 10 areas included in the study the proportion of children reported to be working to all children between 6 and 14 years of age in the families interviewed ranged from 4 to 41 percent, as follows:

	Percent working in beet fields of all children 6 and under 14 years of age [1]
All areas	19
Southern Montana	4
Sidney, Mont	9
Southern Michigan	12
Northern Colorado	12
Western Nebraska	13
Western Slope, Colo	18
Northern Wyoming	19
Arkansas Valley, Colo	19
Southern Minnesota	30
Central Michigan	41

[1] The numbers on which these percentages are based appear in appendix table III, p. 86.

It is noted that the two Montana areas, northern Colorado, western Nebraska, and also one area of the eastern beet region—southern Michigan—were definitely better than average in compliance with the minimum-age provision of the contracts. The two areas ranking markedly below average in compliance were the two eastern areas of central Michigan and southern Minnesota.

The explanation of the large differences between areas with respect to child labor in 1935 appeared to lie chiefly in the attitudes prevailing in the communities toward the observance of the child-labor standards included in the Government contracts. To a lesser extent they are attributable to the relative abundance of adult labor. For instance, the extremely low proportion of children under 14 years of age working in southern Montana is undoubtedly due in some part to the "farmers' strike" against the growing of sugar beets in that area in 1935 and the resulting oversupply of adult labor. On the other hand, in southern Michigan the use of child labor was conspicuously small and yet the supply of adult labor was not excessive in relation to available work, for the beet workers of that area had organized into

a labor union and included in their collective agreement with the growers a provision that "no outside help shall be employed as long as local labor is available." As a result, they had the fullest employment of any area visited.

Effect of 14-year minimum-age standard—1934 and 1935 compared.

In order to ascertain what effect the 14-year minimum-age standard of the Government contracts, authorized by the Jones-Costigan Act, had on the prevalence of child labor in terms of conditions immediately preceding the application of Federal standards, each family visited was asked whether it had done beet work in 1934 and if so whether the children had worked in the beet fields that year.

Of the families interviewed, 847 had worked in the beet fields in 1934 was well as in 1935. In these 847 families the number of children reported as being between 6 and 16 years of age on June 15, 1934, was 1,821. Of these, 933, or 51 percent, were reported to have worked in the beet fields that year. It is thus indicated that child labor was much more prevalent in 1934 than in 1935, when the restriction of the Government contracts on child labor existed and the proportion working of all children between 6 and 16 years of age in the families was 33 percent.

Among 10-year-old children in the families, for example, the proportion reported to be working was 44 percent in 1934 as compared with 12 percent in 1935. The youngest age at which a majority of the children were working in 1934 was 11 years, in contrast to 13 years in 1935. The proportions of children of each age working in 1934 and 1935 are shown in table 6.

TABLE 6.—*Percentage working in beet fields of children 6 and under 16 years of age, by age of child, 1934 and 1935*

Age of child [1]	Percentage working in—		Age of child [1]	Percentage working in—	
	1934 [2]	1935		1934 [2]	1935
Total	51.2	33.4	11 years	65.2	22.0
			12 years	76.2	38.0
6 years	1.1	1.2	13 years	89.8	61.4
7 years	10.8	1.0	14 years	91.3	90.2
8 years	20.7	4.4	15 years	96.4	90.8
9 years	31.3	10.4	6 years, under 16 n. o. s.	40.4	24.8
10 years	44.0	12.3			

[1] Age on June 15.
[2] Based on children whose families did beet work in both 1934 and 1935. For numbers on which percentages are based see appendix table VI, p. 89.

The effect of the Jones-Costigan Act on the frequency of work by children of various age groups may be stated briefly as follows: Of the age group 6 and under 12 years, 28 percent worked in the beet fields in 1934, compared with 9 percent in 1935, a decrease of 68 percent for this group of child workers. Among children of the next older group, those 12 and 13 years of age, 83 percent had worked in 1934 compared with 50 percent in 1935, a drop of 40 percent in the proportion of children of this age group working in the beet fields. The difference between 1934 and 1935 for the 14- and 15-year-old group, that is those immediately above the minimum-age limit, was relatively slight, 94 percent working in 1934 and 91 percent in 1935.

TABLE 7.—*Percentage working in beet fields of children 6 and under 16 years of age, by age of child, 1934 and 1935*

Age of child and year of work [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age			Age of child and year of work	Children 6 and under 16 years of age		
	Total	Working in beet fields			Total	Working in beet fields	
		Number	Percent			Number	Percent
Total children:				14 years, under 16:			
1934	1,821	933	51.2	1934	312	292	93.6
1935	2,004	670	33.4	1935	400	362	90.5
6 years, under 12:				6 years, under 16, n. o. s.:			
1934	1,042	294	28.2	1934	99	40	40.4
1935	1,131	99	8.8	1935	113	28	24.8
12 years, under 14:							
1934	368	307	83.4				
1935	360	181	50.3				

[1] Age on June 15.

The marked decreases from 1934 to 1935 for the age groups below 14 years resulted obviously from the desire of growers that employed the families to comply with the 14-year minimum-age stipulation contained in the production-control contracts, which substantially all of them had signed with the Government. The slight decrease in the proportion working of the children 14 and 15 years of age may have been influenced also by the growers' concern with the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts. A few farmers in 1935 were reported to have forbidden children under 16 years of age to work in their beet fields because of confusion over the minimum-age limit or because they did not want to be responsible for seeing that a child of 14 or 15 did not exceed the maximum 8-hour day stipulated in the contracts for children of that age.

Area differences in the proportion of working children 6 and under 14 were noticeable in 1934 as well as in 1935. In 1934 the proportion of children of these ages working in the three eastern areas combined was 49 percent and in the seven Mountain States areas combined, 40 percent. Though appreciable, this is a smaller difference than that between the eastern and Mountain States regions in 1935, when the proportion of children 6 and under 14 working in the areas visited of each region was 34 and 13 percent, respectively.

TABLE 8.—*Percentage working in beet fields of children 6 and under 14 years of age in eastern and Mountain States areas, 1934 and 1935*

Area [1] and year	Children 6 and under 14 years of age		
	Total	Working in beet fields	
		Number	Percent
All areas:			
1934	1,410	601	42.6
1935	1,491	280	18.8
3 eastern areas: [2]			
1934	363	178	49.0
1935	394	132	33.5
7 Mountain States areas: [3]			
1934	1,047	423	40.4
1935	1,097	148	13.5

[1] For individual areas see appendix table III, p. 86.
[2] Central Michigan, southern Michigan, and southern Minnesota.
[3] Northern Colorado; Arkansas Valley, Colo.; Western Slope, Colo.; western Nebraska; northern Wyoming; southern Montana; and Sidney, Mont.

In this connection it is interesting to refer to the difference between northern Colorado and central Michigan found in the 1920 survey, which shows the reverse relationship between these two areas to that found in 1934 and 1935. In 1920 in northern Colorado 73 percent of the children between 6 and 14 years of age in the families included in the study were reported to have worked in the beet fields; in Michigan, 63 percent.[3] The corresponding percentages from the 1935 study, though based on a sample not strictly comparable with the 1920 sample, are 12 percent for northern Colorado and 41 percent for central Michigan. An explanation of this reversal in relationship existing between the two areas in 1920 may be found in part in the exceptionally strong tendency of the Russian-German families to have their children work and in the fact that the fathers of almost three-fourths of the Colorado families included in the 1920 study were Russian-Germans, whereas Russian-Germans had comprised a negligible proportion of the fathers of the Michigan families included in 1920 and a small proportion in northern Colorado families in 1935.[4] A tendency for Russian-German families to have their children working at a younger age than for other families of beet workers was observed for 1934, before the application of the Government minimum-age standard for the use of children in the beet fields. The two racial groups were found to be conforming with these standards about equally well in 1935. Information on work done in 1934 showed that 57 percent of the children of the age group 6 to 14 in Russian-German families of beet laborers visited were working, as compared with 37 percent in Spanish-speaking families and 42 percent in the others.

The noticeable reduction in the use of child labor which took place between 1920 and 1934 in Colorado was undoubtedly influenced also by public discussion of the evils of child labor during that period and by the efforts of one large sugar-manufacturing company to discourage the use of young children in the fields. Before the enactment of the Jones-Costigan Act this company had inserted in the forms prepared for labor contracts between growers and laborers a provision that "children 11 years of age or under are not permitted to work under this contract." This company also stressed the importance of complying with the child-labor provisions set by the Government contracts in 1935.

WORK PERFORMED BY CHILDREN

The processes at which children worked.

"Beets is hard work for a man. It is awful hard work for the little children," families would explain to the investigators. Yet for the most part work performed by the children was identical with that done by their parents.

In the early work of the season, that of thinning the young plants, many children performed the operations both of blocking and of thinning. Each of these operations requires constant kneeling or stooping, which contributes to the fatiguing nature of the work. An added trying and doubtless injurious aspect of this work comes from breathing the dust raised from the soil in the process. The thinning work, which is carried on in late spring, is done under a hot sun that

[3] Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, pp. 5, 34, 94. Children's Bureau Publication 115. Washington, 1923.
[4] Ibid., pp. 15, 83.

was very trying to many workers. Of the 670 children 6 and under 16 years of age working in 1935, 637, or 95 percent, worked at the thinning process (table 9). Ninety-one of the ninety-nine working children under 12 years of age thinned beets.

The hoeing and weeding work was done somewhat less frequently by the children of the families of beet laborers visited than was the thinning work. One, if not the chief, reason for this fact is that the pressure to complete this work is usually not so great as for other processes. The amount of work required per acre at this process is less than at the other processes, and longer time may be taken to complete the work without harm to the crop. However, 82 percent of the child workers under 16 years of age included in this survey worked at the hoeing and weeding operations. The proportion that worked at hoeing among the youngest age group of working children—those 6 and under 12 years—was 57 percent, while among those 12 and under 14 the proportion was 79 percent. Almost all the working children of the upper age group, those 14 and 15 years of age, worked at hoeing.

TABLE 9.—*Percentage of working children 6 and under 16 years of age who worked at thinning and at hoeing, by age of child and area, 1935*

Age of child [1] and area	Working children 6 and under 16 years of age				
	Total	Who worked at—			
		Thinning		Hoeing	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	670	637	95.1	549	81.9
3 eastern areas	231	216	93.5	196	84.8
7 Mountain States areas	439	421	95.9	353	80.4
6 years, under 12	99	91	91.9	56	56.6
3 eastern areas	61	53	86.9	37	60.7
7 Mountain States areas	38	38	[2]	19	[2]
12 years, under 14	181	166	91.7	143	79.0
3 eastern areas	71	66	93.0	63	88.7
7 Mountain States areas	110	100	90.9	80	72.7
14 years, under 16	362	353	97.5	326	90.1
3 eastern areas	97	95	97.9	94	96.9
7 Mountain States areas	265	258	97.4	232	87.5
6 years, under 16, n. o. s.	28	27	----------	[2]	----------

[1] Age on June 15, 1935.
[2] Percent not shown because number of children was less than 50.

Harvest work is considered the hardest of all the hand-labor operations in the beet fields, requiring the most strength and endurance in the worker. The topping operation proper requires considerable skill to manipulate the heavy topping knife, which weighs nearly a pound, in such a way that only the proper amount of the crown of the beet is removed with the leaves. It also requires continual rapid bending to pick up the beets. The younger children could not do the actual topping but did do the pulling, work which requires less skill. The

weight of the beets, typically 2 to 3 pounds each after they are topped, adds to the fatiguing nature of the topping and pulling work, since the beets are handled in very large numbers and with very great rapidity.

Although the harvest work is hard and comes at a time when the weather may be raw and cold and when school is in session, there is always great urgency for applying as many hands as possible to the work in order to be sure to finish it before the beets freeze in the ground and to avoid the necessity of hiring extra help. Children were found to work at the harvest operations of pulling, topping, or both, nearly as frequently as at thinning. The vast majority, 91 percent, of the total number of working children who were under 16 years of age at the time of harvesting (age as of October 15, 1935), and who were in families that were interviewed after the topping season had begun did harvest work in beet fields. This is shown in table 10, which is based on those families that were interviewed during or after the topping season and for whom information could be obtained.

TABLE 10.—*Percentage that worked at topping, of working children 6 and under 16 years of age, in families interviewed after topping season began, by age of child and by area, 1935*

Age of child [1] and area	Working children 6 and under 16 years of age		
	Total	Who worked at topping	
		Number	Percent
Total	440	400	90.9
3 eastern areas	214	202	94.4
4 Mountain States areas [2]	226	198	87.6
6 years, under 12	64	52	81.3
3 eastern areas	50	45	90.0
4 Mountain States areas [2]	14	7	(3)
12 years, under 14	111	97	87.4
3 eastern areas	66	62	93.9
4 Mountain States areas [2]	45	35	(3)
14 years, under 16	263	249	94.7
3 eastern areas	97	94	96.9
4 Mountain States areas [2]	166	155	93.4
6 years, under 16 n. o. s.	2	2	

[1] Age on Oct. 15, 1935.
[2] Includes western Nebraska, northern Wyoming, southern Montana, Sidney, Mont.; the figures also include 5 children in the Western Slope, Colo., area. The families in the other 3 Mountain States areas were visited before harvesting work began.
[3] Percent not shown because number of children was less than 50.

Daily hours of work.

The working hours of beet laborers tend to be extremely long, reflecting both the traditional 10-hour day for agricultural labor and the pressure on the workers to perform a maximum amount of work within a brief seasonal period. A workday from sunup to sundown or, as aptly phrased by one worker, "from kin see to can't see," has not been uncommon among beet workers even for the children.

The 8-hour standard provided in the sugar-beet production-adjustment contract as the maximum workday for children 14 and under 16 years of age arose from a very real need to remedy excessively long daily hours of work customary among beet laborers for young and old alike. Unfortunately it did not appear to result in shortening the hours of work for more than a small proportion of the young workers in 1935.

At the thinning process only 10 percent of the child workers under 16 were reported to work less than 8 hours and another 28 percent, approximately 8 hours a day. The other 62 percent were reported to have worked usually 9 or more hours a day despite the 8-hour maximum specified for children 14 to 16 in the Government contracts. One-fourth of the children under 16 were reported to work usually 12 to 15 hours a day at this process.

TABLE 11.—*Usual daily hours of work in beet fields of children working in specified processes, 1935*

Usual daily hours of work [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age working at—					
	Thinning		Hoeing		Topping	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total working at process	637		549		[2] 400	
Hours reported	617	100.0	538	100.0	392	100.0
Less than 4	17	2.8	8	1.5	24	6.1
4, less than 8	43	7.0	65	12.1	31	7.9
8	174	28.2	185	34.4	110	28.0
9	45	7.3	68	12.6	34	8.7
10	94	15.2	104	19.3	74	18.9
11	89	14.4	59	11.0	67	17.1
12	71	11.5	27	5.0	36	9.2
13	53	8.6	16	3.0	11	2.8
14 or more	31	5.0	6	1.1	5	1.3
Hours not reported	20		11		8	
Median hours	10		9		10	

[1] Hours are reported to the nearest whole number.
[2] Working children in families interviewed after topping season had begun.

Information on the number of hours that each child usually worked in a day was obtained from his parents. The time taken out for meals or other extended rest periods was deducted from the total time spent in the fields. In the absence of any fixed schedule of working hours on which exact data on working time could be based, the figures given on daily working hours represent the length of the day most commonly worked by the particular child in terms of the nearest whole number. Therefore children reported as working 8 hours a day actually worked from 7½ to 8½ hours a day. The few children reported to have worked exactly 8½ hours a day have been classed with the 9-hour group. It should also be noted that the hours given, representing the usual length of workday, do not show the longest day worked by the child.

Daily hours of work at hoeing and weeding tended to be somewhat shorter than hours of work at thinning, but even so they were 9 or more a day for slightly over half the children doing this work.

Hours of work at the topping process tended to be somewhat longer than those at hoeing but shorter than those at thinning, the other process at which the pressure is very great. A workday shorter at topping than at thinning is due largely to the fact that the hours of daylight at harvest season were fewer than in early summer. Yet at topping work 58 percent of the children under 16 were reported to work usually 9 or more hours a day and 11 percent, 12 or more hours a day. In those cases where extremely long hours were reported for topping—in one case a 16-hour day—the work was made possible with the aid of illumination from the moon, a searchlight, or the headlights of a truck.

A workday of less than 4 hours at topping was reported for 6 percent of the children, a larger proportion with such short hours than at any of the other processes. This small group of children with short hours includes a number who attended school regularly and worked 2 hours or so in the late afternoon and on Saturday.

The age of the working children naturally had some influence on the length of the workday, the older children being more likely to work the longer hours than the younger ones. At the thinning process, for instance, 49 percent of the children 6 and less than 12 years of age worked 9 or more hours, while of the children 12 and under 14 years, 61 percent usually worked such hours, and of those 14 and under 16 years 67 percent thinned with usual daily hours of 9 or more. However, the younger group of children was represented to some extent among those working very long hours. Approximately one-sixth of the children under 12 years of age were reported to have worked 12 or more hours a day at the thinning process.

TABLE 12.—*Usual daily hours of work at thinning for children of specified ages, 1935*

Usual daily hours of work [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age						
	Total	6 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		6 years, under 16, n. o. s.
		Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	
Total	637	91		168		358		20
Hours reported	617	81	100.0	161	100.0	355	100.0	20
Less than 4	17	12	14.8	3	1.9	2	.6	
4, less than 8	43	16	19.8	13	8.1	12	3.4	2
8	174	13	16.0	47	29.2	104	29.3	10
9	45	5	6.2	15	9.3	24	6.8	1
10	94	8	9.9	23	14.3	60	16.9	3
11	89	12	14.8	16	9.9	59	16.6	2
12	71	3	3.7	23	14.3	43	12.1	2
13	53	10	12.3	11	6.8	32	9.0	
14	31	2	2.5	10	6.2	19	5.3	
Hours not reported	20	10		7		3		
Median hours	10	9		10		11		

[1] Hours are reported to the nearest whole number.

The 8-hour limitation to daily working time for children under 16 prescribed in the Government contracts was found to be less frequently observed in the areas of the eastern beet region than in those of the Mountain States beet region. Table 13 shows that only 29

percent of the working children in the families interviewed in the eastern beet region reported a usual workday of approximately 8 hours or less, in conformity with the provision of the Government contracts, while engaged in the thinning process, whereas 43 percent of those in the Mountain States region were working a usual workday at thinning of approximately 8 hours.

TABLE 13.—*Usual daily hours of work at thinning for children 6 and under 16 years of age in eastern and Mountain States areas, 1935*

Usual daily hours of work [1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age			
	In 3 eastern areas		In 7 Mountain States areas	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total working at process	216		421	
Hours reported	208	100.0	409	100.0
Less than 8	34	16.4	26	6.4
8	26	12.5	148	36.2
9, less than 12	72	34.6	156	38.1
12 or more	76	36.5	79	19.3
Hours not reported	8		12	

[1] Hours are reported to the nearest whole number.

Reference to the 1920 survey of child labor in the beet fields indicates that less progress has taken place in shortening the workday than in keeping the younger children out of the fields. A workday of 8 hours or less was reported for a larger proportion of the child workers in 1935 than in 1920, but on the other hand a workday of 12 hours or more was found to be no less frequent in 1935 than in 1920. Comparison of hours at thinning by children in laborers' families for the two regions in the 2 years is as follows:

	Colorado 1920 [1]	*7 Mountain States areas, 1935*	*Michigan 1920* [1]	*3 eastern areas, 1935*
Less than 8 hours	3.3	6.4	5.7	16.4
8 hours	6.6	36.2	2.9	12.5
9 hours, less than 12	73.4	38.1	60.6	34.6
12 or more hours	16.7	19.3	30.8	36.5

[1] Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, pp. 28, 91. Children's Bureau Publication 115. Washington, 1923.

At least half the children worked 10 or more hours a day when thinning in 1920 as well as in 1935.

The fatigue and strain of these long hours of work were increased by the pressure for speed. One mother said: "Beets is such hard work for the big and for the little. It would not be so bad if you did not have to work so fast. You have to hurry so much all the time for fear the boss will say you do not have enough done and you have to get [and pay for] help." The strain of long hours of work, day after day, was unrelieved for many of the children except for time off on Sundays, and not all families rested from their work even then. The majority of the working children worked the same daily hours

as did the adults in their families. Even among children under 12 years of age nearly half worked as long hours as their parents when thinning and when topping and more than half when hoeing. In the eastern areas, where the beets were not irrigated and where natural rainfall was relied upon, the families occasionally had a whole day off or worked a short day because of rainy weather. But such interruptions to labor were not often found in the Mountain States areas, where there was little rainfall and the beet crop was an irrigated one.

Length of working periods.

The drive of these extremely long hours of work would usually last continuously over the full length of the period during which each process was performed, the objective of the family being the completion of the work in the shortest possible period of time. The median number of days worked by children included in this study for whom information could be obtained was 21 days for thinning, 14 days for hoeing, and 23 days for topping. The median number of days worked in the entire 1935 season was 58 for the children under 16 in families interviewed after the completion of the harvest work. The majority of them worked at least as many days as the adults in their families did.

Children of the eastern areas of Michigan and Minnesota were found to be working in the beet fields for more days in the season than those in the three Mountain States areas for which the information could be obtained, a median of 65 days for the former in contrast to a median of 48 days for the latter. More than a fourth of the children in the eastern areas worked in the beet fields 80 or more days in the year, the equivalent of 13 or more weeks of 6 working days each (table 14).

TABLE 14.—*Number of days worked by children in beet fields in the eastern and in the Mountain States areas during the 1935 season*

Total days worked	Children 6 and under 16 years of age [1]					
	6 areas		3 eastern areas		3 Mountain States areas [2]	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	383		214		169	
Days reported	335	100.0	205	100.0	130	100.0
Less than 20	28	8.4	20	9.8	8	6.2
20, less than 30	24	7.2	7	3.4	17	13.1
30, less than 40	33	9.9	13	6.3	20	15.4
40, less than 50	44	13.1	19	9.3	25	19.2
50, less than 60	46	13.7	23	11.2	23	17.7
60, less than 70	61	18.2	40	19.5	21	16.2
70, less than 80	34	10.1	25	12.2	9	6.9
80, less than 90	32	9.6	30	14.6	2	1.5
90 or more	33	9.8	28	13.7	5	3.8
Days not reported	48		9		39	
Median number of days	58		65		48	

[1] Age on Oct. 15, 1935.
[2] Includes the 2 Montana areas and northern Wyoming, the only areas in the Mountain States region visited after families had completed their harvest work.

The corresponding proportion of working children in the Mountain States beet region for which as long a working season was reported was very small, only about 5 percent. The greater duration of employment of children in the eastern beet fields reflects similar differences between the two regions in the acreage handled per family and in the working period of adults. Whether or not a working child had passed his fourteenth birthday appeared to have less effect on the length of the working period than the region in which he worked. Children under 14 years of age in the eastern areas for whom the information is reported tended to work more days in the season (a median of 61 days) than those 14 and 15 years of age in the three Mountain States areas (a median of 49 days).

Among the child workers under 14 years of age there was a small but significant proportion who worked fewer days than adults in the family because of the intervention of the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts. Some comment was heard that such child labor as had existed in violation of the terms of the Government contracts in 1935 occurred largely at the beginning of the thinning season, just at the time the N. R. A. codes were declared unconstitutional, but that before 2 or 3 weeks had passed this was cleared up. In the course of the field work of the study, only 25 working children under 14 were reported to have started work at the beginning of the thinning period and then to have been forbidden to continue because of the child-labor provisions. These comprised 10 percent of all children under 14 reported as working 3 or more days in 1935. No children were reported to have worked fewer days than adults in the family at the hoeing process because of the child-labor provisions, and only one child worked fewer days at the topping process for this reason.

PROBLEMS OF EFFECTUATING COMPLIANCE WITH CHILD-LABOR STANDARDS

Despite the approval frequently accorded the child-labor provisions of the A. A. A. contracts, the findings of this study show that approval of the child-labor standards by numerous individuals and reliance on voluntary compliance by the growers did not fully eliminate child labor in violation of the legal standards. For instance, of the families interviewed with children between 6 and 14 years of age, 30 percent were allowing their children to work in violation of the 14-year minimum standard, and it is probable that a similar proportion of growers employing families with children of these ages were involved. A few of the problems involved in obtaining compliance with the A. A. A. child-labor standards will be discussed briefly at this point.

Determination of whether growers complied with the provisions of their production-adjustment contracts was locally in the hands of the sugar-beet-control committees that the A. A. A. had established in each sugar-beet factory district. These committees usually had as their agent a compliance officer, whose duties included measuring the acreage of beets planted by the growers and handling matters regarding compliance with the child-labor and minimum-wage provisions. The general plan followed with respect to the child-labor provisions in the first year of this program was to give full publicity to the child-labor requirements and to rely on voluntary cooperation of the grow-

ers for compliance with them without providing specific administrative measures for aiding growers in determining the age of children and for ascertaining whether particular growers did observe the child-labor provisions.

Essential to compliance with the child-labor provisions but least difficult of the problems involved was informing all persons affected of the terms of the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts and warning them not to violate these terms. In most localities this appeared to be well done. Repeated reminders to workers and growers of the child-labor terms of the Government contracts had been made in the localities visited through newspaper publicity, notices sent through the mail, personal conversation, and other means. These were made chiefly by representatives of the A. A. A. and by the sugar companies. In one town the principal of the school reported distributing notices to the children telling them that if they stayed out of school to help with the beets they were jeopardizing their farmer's chance of getting a Government benefit. Conspicuous for being the only case of its kind found, was that of one A. A. A. compliance officer who reported to the Children's Bureau investigator that he gave no publicity to information regarding the labor aspects of the sugar-beet control program because he thought that such publicity would be likely to cause labor trouble.

A less obvious and therefore more difficult problem to handle than that of spreading information to persons affected was obtaining evidence of the age of the children whom growers or parents wished to put to work. It has been noted that there was a striking difference in the extent of compliance with the minimum-age standard between children under 12 years of age and those 12 and 13 years of age; that is, those in the age group immediately below the minimum-age limit. In several areas—northern Colorado, the two Montana areas, southern Michigan, and western Nebraska—no children under 12 years of age, or substantially none, were found to have worked; apparently in these areas a very real and conscientious effort was made to eliminate child labor in the beet fields. However, these very areas were not proportionately successful with respect to reducing the prevalence of work in the beet fields by children 12 or 13 years of age. In no area was the proportion of children 12 and 13 years of age working less than one-fifth of the number in the families. In some areas approximately half, and in two about three-fourths, of the children of these ages were working (see appendix table III, p. 86).

This very general lack of success in eliminating the labor of children 12 and 13 years of age from the beet fields even in areas where there was success in eliminating the work of young children is clearly attributable in part to the absence of any system of checking the age of children just below the 14-year limit. Since children under 14 years of age are not readily identifiable by their appearance, many growers may have violated the child-labor terms of their contract with the Government unintentionally in accepting a parent's unverified statement regarding the age of a child. An awareness of the problem was widely met with, however, and a variety of attempts to solve it was found.

One large sugar company operating in the Mountain States region recognized the problem of identifying children by age. This company therefore provided on the form prepared for use as the labor contract

between grower and laborer a place for listing the name and age of each child under the age of 17 years who was to work under the contract. This form, which was used in northern Colorado, western Nebraska, and southern Montana, of the areas visited, included the following statement, to which the signature of the contracting laborer was to be added:

> I hereby certify and warrant that the following is a true and correct statement of the age (at last birthday) of each laborer under the age of 17 years to be employed on any work under this contract.

This attempt to check the age of children was doubtless of some value in impressing the necessity of observing the child-labor provisions on both growers and laborers and also in making misrepresentation of age by families more difficult than through oral statement.

This method of ascertaining the age of children and their eligibility to work by the signed statement of the parent was not, however, altogether satisfactory in frequency of use or in accuracy. In the course of the survey the investigators saw copies of labor contracts on these forms containing a place for children's names and ages for 70 families in which children under 16 were working. In 26 of these families one or more children under 16 were working, although none of them were listed on the contract. In one family a child was named but the age not given. In the 43 others the contract showed the names and ages of at least one working child. In 10, or nearly a fourth of all the 43 families using the form for listing names and ages of working children, it was found that a child less than 14 years was stated to be 14 or older. In almost as many cases children listed as 16 or older were found by the Children's Bureau investigators to be only 14 or 15.

A few growers in some localities attempted to verify the parent's statement of age by requesting the school to furnish information from its records for a particular child. As was previously mentioned, this type of evidence was not found to be wholly reliable, although it was of definite value in the absence of a better system, and its use illustrates the desire of the growers to have documentary evidence of age.

In none of the States visited were employment certificates showing age in general use for beet workers, although in these States such certificates were provided for in the State child-labor laws for children under 16 or under 18 years of age in industrial and commercial occupations. Montana was the only one of the six States visited that had a State law making definite provision for employment or age certificates for children in agriculture. But in that State the law required them only for work during school hours. These certificates were required by law to be based on prescribed types of documentary evidence of age—a birth or baptismal certificate if obtainable. However, there was no State supervision of the issuance of employment certificates, and in practice they were in use in only a few of the localities visited, informal permission for absence from school sufficing in the others. The certification system of Montana was further limited in usefulness to beet growers because no way had been devised either by the schools administering the employment-certificate provisions or by the sugar-beet-control committees whereby the employers would receive copies of the certificates issued and thus have

the age information contained in them made available to them as a routine matter.

The need of a definite system for determining the age of children and the readiness with which some growers would accept such a system was shown by such comments as the following: "My laborer had a girl 13 years and 7 months old who wanted to work. The compliance officer said she could not work unless she was 14. What if she said she was 14 and was not? Will they throw the responsibility on the farmer? I do not like that. I wish they had someone to be responsible for establishing age so the farmer could be sure he was doing the right thing."

Another problem in obtaining compliance with the 14-year minimum age was that of finding out officially whether children known to be under 14 years of age actually worked in the fields. Although the A. A. A., through its local compliance officers, assumed responsibility for checking farmers' statements of sugar-beet acreage by measuring fields, it did not systematically inspect fields for the use of child labor. Reliance for information on compliance with the child-labor provisions was placed on the receipt of complaints. The compliance officers of the A. A. A. who were interviewed in practically every locality visited, reported that there were few cases in which they had known definitely that children under 14 had been working, and that in such cases threats to file a complaint against a grower were made if necessary in order to persuade him to take steps toward the discontinuance of the child's work. No formal complaint against a grower for using child labor contrary to the provisions of the production-adjustment contracts was reported to have been filed by any compliance office visited.[5]

It is evident from the findings of this study that the method of relying on complaints for knowledge of violations of the child-labor terms of the contract was not adequate for informing the administrators of the program of existing conditions. An illustration of the limitations of that method is contained in one grower's comment on his reaction to reporting his neighbor to the A. A. A. if he knew that his neighbor was violating the child-labor terms of his Government contract. He said: "Well, it is just like seeing someone stealing a horse. I know I would not report my neighbor because I would not want any trouble. You might know it was wrong but you would not do anything about it."

School officials commented that they knew of cases where children worked contrary to the child-labor provisions of the contracts, but that "of course we have said nothing." From officials of schools and of one beet growers' association came the suggestion of a need for the inspection of fields for child labor and for withholding of benefits from growers that violated the terms of their Government contracts. "Then the farmers would be afraid of being caught, but now they think they can take chances."

The maximum 8-hour day specified for 14- and 15-year-old children offered even more difficult problems from the point of view of compliance than the 14-year minimum age. It has already been noted

[5] Information obtained for this study on the use of children by particular growers was not made available to the A. A. A. by the Children's Bureau because the survey was undertaken as a research project and the information was obtained with the understanding that identity of persons would not be disclosed.

that the 8-hour day was not observed for even the majority of working children under 16 years of age, and that in the opinion of many the standard was impractical. Some farmers did, however, make a conscientious effort to have children of 14 and 15 work no more than 8 hours a day. Compliance was achieved sometimes by impressing upon parents their responsibility for seeing that children did not work beyond 8 hours, thereby helping the grower to get his benefit payment. In some cases the farmers themselves worked in fields where they could watch over their laborers and keep track of the time the children started and stopped work each day.

Efforts to establish clock hours between which the children under 16 years of age might work met with difficulty because the children working fewer hours than their parents usually preferred taking a prolonged rest during the middle of the day to working their allotted hours straight through with only a brief stop for lunch. In some cases where the field was not near the family's home a child would have to wait at the field for a ride home or else have to walk a considerable distance at the end of his working day if he stopped work earlier than the others.

Difficult problems are involved in developing a method for the effective limitation of children's daily hours of work in an occupation completely unstandardized as to working time, but the problems are a challenge to those who believe that excessive hours of work are detrimental to the health and well-being of children.

INTERFERENCE OF BEET WORK WITH THE SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN

The work of young children in the beet fields is a matter of concern not only because it is a physical tax on the children and because it involves a violation of Federal child-labor standards established under the A. A. A. program, but also because it interferes with their school attendance and their assimilation in the community. Moreover, problems of obtaining compliance with the child-labor standards of the Government contracts are related closely to those of enforcing school-attendance standards.

In some localities it was common for children to miss several days or weeks of school at the end of the spring term because of their own or their families' beet work, although in many localities the spring term closed about the middle of May, just before the spring work began. The school time lost in the fall was much greater. Fall absence because of beet work extended over the actual period of the harvest work done by the family, usually 3 to 5 weeks, and it not uncommonly also involved failure to enroll in school for the period of 3 weeks or a month before the topping work began. This more extended absence was found chiefly among children in migratory families but sometimes among children that were permanent residents. In the case of such extended absences the children or the parents or both usually did not think it worth while to bother with school until after topping work was out of the way, and sometimes they were waiting until harvest pay day to get the children the clothes they needed for school.

During the course of the survey information was obtained on the school attendance of children in the preceding and current school years (1934–35 and 1935–36) and on the school grades entered or to be entered the fall of 1935. Data on school grades and absences were obtained from the children's parents and then were checked against school records insofar as these were available. The information covers all children in the families interviewed, whether or not they worked in the beet fields. In order to facilitate consideration of the findings on school attendance in relation to compulsory school-attendance requirements and to retardation, the ages of the children, for the purposes of this section of the report, are given as of September 1, in accordance with the practice generally followed in school statistics. This section of the report, with respect to findings for the school year 1935–36, is therefore based on the 2,014 children in the families interviewed that were 6 and under 16 years of age on September 1, 1935, and, with respect to findings for the school year 1934–35, it is based on the 1,815 children 6 and under 16 years on September 1, 1934, in those families that worked beets in 1934.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ABSENCE

Children who enrolled or expected to enroll in the fall term of school in 1935 before the topping season closed numbered slightly more than two-thirds of the 2,014 children that were 6 and under 16 years of age on September 1. More than a fifth had not enrolled in school or were not expecting to enroll until after the harvest period closed. This period was not over until early November in most of the areas visited. Moreover, nearly one-tenth of the children of this age group were not expecting to attend school at all during the current school year. These proportions of children enrolling before the harvest closed or not enrolling at all in the 1935–36 school year are similar to those for the previous school year, 1934–35, for the children in families doing beet work in 1934, as shown in table 15. The proportions attending or expecting to attend school and enrolling before the harvest was completed were slightly higher in the fall of 1935 than in the fall of 1934, but the differences are not sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the child-labor provisions of the Government contracts effective in 1935 had served to any large extent to increase prompt school enrollment among children of beet laborers in the areas visited. Several school officials and teachers interviewed remarked to investigators of the Children's Bureau that contrary to their expectations the child-labor regulations had not seemed to affect greatly the attendance at school of children in laborers' families.

TABLE 15.—*School enrollment in school years 1934–35 and 1935–36 of children in families working in beet fields*

School enrollment	Children 6 and under 16 years of age [1] in families working in beet fields			
	School year 1934–35		School year 1935–36	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	1,815		2,014	
Enrollment reported	1,781	100.0	1,969	100.0
Enrolled or expected to enroll	1,604	90.1	1,802	91.5
Before close of topping season	1,107	62.2	1,322	67.1
After close of topping season	423	23.8	419	21.3
Period not reported	74	4.1	61	3.1
Not enrolled or not expected to enroll	177	9.9	167	8.5
Enrollment not reported	34		45	

[1] Age on Sept. 1, 1934, for school year 1934–35; age on Sept. 1, 1935, for school year 1935–36.

Prompt enrollment in the fall term of school was much more common among children in nonmigratory families than among children in migratory families. The real difference existed between children of the nonmigratory families and those in the group of migratory families that remained on the farms throughout the summer and did not go back to their winter residences for August and September between the times that they needed to be at the farm for hoeing and for topping. In fact the families that did return to their winter homes

for the 2-month period before topping began had nearly as good a record for school enrollment as the nonmigratory families, one reason for their return doubtless being the desire to start the children in school. In migratory families remaining at their beet residences throughout the summer, 43 percent of the children between 6 and 16 years of age were reported as not enrolled or not expecting to enroll in school until after the harvest was completed; while only 13 percent of the children in the nonmigratory families were reported to have so delayed school enrollment. In some cases the migratory children were on remote farms where no school was available, but usually a rural school was available within walking distance, so that school attendance was possible if the family very much wanted to send the children. Sometimes, when the family worked on a farm near the town where they lived in the winter months, school-bus transportation from the farm to the town school made it possible for the children to attend the same school whether they were staying on the farm or in town. Failure to enroll in school at all, either before or after the close of the topping season, was about equally common among children of the two groups of migratory families, those remaining on the farms the full season and those returning to town for early fall, and among children in nonmigratory families—8 to 9 percent of the total number of children in each group.

Striking differences were found to exist between the various areas in the time when children enrolled in school relative to the topping period. In general the areas with the least migration and the least child labor tended to have the largest proportions of children enrolling early in school. The two Montana areas and southern Michigan were outstanding for the large proportion of children in laborers' families enrolling early in the fall and not waiting until after the topping season was closed—between 85 and 88 percent of the children between 6 and 16 years of age in these areas. It will be recalled that these are three of the four areas that had fewest children under 14 working in the beet fields. The smallest proportion of children enrolled before the close of the harvest season were in areas of southern Minnesota and western Nebraska. In each of these areas less than 60 percent of the children between 6 and 16 years were reported as having enrolled or as expecting to enroll before the topping season closed. In connection with the exceptionally small proportion enrolling early in southern Minnesota (19 percent) it is noted that only families that migrated to St. Paul and Minneapolis for the winter were included in the study for this area, and almost all of them remained on the farms during September. In the three Colorado areas, central Michigan, and northern Wyoming, 60 to 75 percent of the children in the laborers' families enrolled or expected to enroll before the close of the topping period (table 16).

TABLE 16.—*School enrollment in school year 1935–36, by area in which family was interviewed*

Area in which family was interviewed	Children 6 and under 16 years of age [1] in beet laborers' families				
	Total [2]	Percent enrolled or expected to enroll—			Percent not enrolled nor expected to enroll
		Before close of topping season	After close of topping season	Period not reported	
Total children for whom enrollment was reported	[2] 1,969	67.1	21.3	3.1	8.5
3 eastern areas:					
Central Michigan	280	68.9	22.5	3.9	4.7
Southern Michigan	78	88.5			11.5
Southern Minnesota	131	19.1	68.7		12.2
7 Mountain States areas:					
Northern Colorado	395	70.1	12.4	8.6	8.9
Arkansas Valley, Colo	127	74.0	14.2	3.1	8.7
Western Slope, Colo	121	63.6	24.8		11.6
Western Nebraska	200	56.0	35.0	1.5	7.5
Northern Wyoming	311	62.4	25.7	2.6	9.3
Southern Montana	219	86.8	6.8		6.4
Sidney, Mont	107	85.1	3.7	.9	10.3

[1] Age on Sept. 1, 1935.
[2] School enrollment was not reported for 45 children.

The frequency of failure to enroll in school at all, either before or after the completion of harvest, likewise varied between areas but not in the same pattern as the areas varied with respect to tardy enrollment. Central Michigan was the area with the smallest proportion of children (5 percent) reported as not enrolled or not intending to enroll at any time during the school year. Southern Michigan, southern Minnesota, and Western Slope, Colo., were the areas with the highest proportions, each with 12 percent. Failure to attend school at any time during the year occurred mainly among children under 8 years of age and among those 14 years of age or over. Among children between 8 and 14, failure to enroll accounted for only 2 percent of the total number in the age group for all areas combined, but among the children 6 or 7 years of age and among children 14 and 15 years of age, failure to enroll accounted for as much as 14 and 20 percent, respectively (table 17).

TABLE 17.—*School enrollment in school year 1935–36, by age of child*

School enrollment, 1935–36	Children 6 and under 16 years of age in beet laborers' families								
	Total		Age of child [1]						
			6 years, under 8		8 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		Not reported
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	
Total	2,014		370		1,149		403		92
Enrollment reported	1,969	100.0	360	100.0	1,132	100.0	390	100.0	87
Enrolled or expected to enroll	1,802	91.5	311	86.4	1,111	98.1	311	79.7	69
Before close of topping season	1,322	67.1	251	69.7	838	74.0	201	51.5	32
After close of topping season	419	21.3	57	15.9	240	21.2	100	25.6	22
Period not reported	61	3.1	3	.8	33	2.9	10	2.6	15
Not enrolled or not expected to enroll	167	8.5	49	13.6	21	1.9	79	20.3	18
Enrollment not reported	45		10		17		13		5

[1] Age on Sept. 1, 1935.

The amount of school time lost was not obtained for the fall of 1935 because most of the visits of the Children's Bureau's representatives were made before the end of the harvest season and before complete reports could be obtained for many children. An attempt was made, however, to obtain the number of days of school absence in the school year 1934–35 for each child in a family with beet work in 1934. The information obtained concerning school days missed from the sessions of the school available to them shows that 825, or more than half, of the children between 6 and 16 years of age who attended school in 1934–35, whether enrolling before or after the harvest season closed, were absent for reasons attributed by the family to their own or their family's work in the beet fields. The duration of such absence during the school year—fall, spring, or both—was 25 or more school days for approximately half of those losing school time for such reasons. It was 45 or more school days for more than a fourth of the children absent because of beet work and 60 or more school days for a tenth of them. The length of the school term in the areas visited was with few exceptions between 170 and 180 days (8½- or 9-month terms). These figures on the number of school days lost include not only absences of children while working in the beet fields but also absences of children kept at home to care for house and babies while other members of the family worked in the beet fields and absences of children in migratory families who were waiting until their return to their winter homes before starting the children to school. They do not include absences explained as due to illness, lack of clothes, or the child's working on beans, onions, or other crops besides beets.

APPLICATION OF COMPULSORY-SCHOOL-ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Much of the nonattendance of children at school occurred in violation of State compulsory-school-attendance requirements. Briefly the compulsory-school-attendance standards of the States visited were as follows:

Each of the six States included in the study had laws requiring school attendance for the full time that the schools were in session for children under 16 years of age and, in the case of Wyoming, for children under 17 years of age. The lower age limit was either 7 or 8 years in each of these States. Nebraska was the one State whose compulsory-school-attendance law contained a specific exemption to the requirement that children attend the entire school session such as to permit unexcused absence during the school term. This exemption permitted children outside metropolitan or incorporated cities (i. e., cities of 1,000 or more population) to be absent for 20 days if attending a school with a 9-month term, or to be absent 10 or 15 days if attending a school with a term of 7 or 8 months, respectively. The 9-month term, however, was usual for schools in the section of the State visited, so that this leeway of 20 days' absence applied to those Nebraska children included in the study if and when they were not in city school districts.

Exemptions from school attendance were allowed for children under certain conditions by the laws of each of the six States. These generally applied to children above a certain age, usually 14 years, who had completed a certain grade, usually the eighth. Sometimes an added requirement was that the children's earnings should be necessary for family support. Exemption was usually made also for children of any age who were mentally or physically incapacitated or to whom no school was available. Some other exemptions to compulsory school attendance were vague as to intended application, such as the Colorado exemption of a child 14 years or over if exemption is for his best interest, and the Wyoming provision that a child may be excused if the law would work a hardship. These latter exemptions, which might possibly have been applied to certain children of beet laborers, did not seem to be used in practice because, in these States, policies of not strictly enforcing the compulsory-school-attendance requirements in the case of children of beet laborers were so general that no attempt seemed to be made to interpret specific exemption provisions as justifying the absence of children from school.

Compulsory-school-attendance laws were found to be variously interpreted and applied by different school officials within a State, and the attitudes of these officials toward the State laws requiring compulsory school attendance for the children of beet laborers were found to range all the way from complete disregard to strict enforcement. In Colorado the school officials interviewed in most of the school districts visited stated that they did not believe they could enforce attendance for more than the 12 weeks required by an earlier law [1] although a more recent law requires attendance of minors between 8 and 16 years for the full time.[2] It appeared that this doubt arose from some question of the constitutionality of the later provision. At least this doubt offered a basis for a nonenforcement policy where

[1] Colo., Comp. Laws, 1935, ch. 146, sec. 276.
[2] Ibid.

another reason was community approval of school absence for beet work. As one county superintendent of schools commented: "It would raise a howl if I started to enforce school attendance. The farmers would not support me."

In central Michigan school absence during the working season of beet laborers' children both above and below the age of 14 was countenanced by school officials chiefly on the ground that the work of the children was necessary for the support of their families, although the law allowed this excuse only for children at least 14 years of age who had completed the sixth grade. One county commissioner of schools explained: "The families do not have money for clothes and books, so we let the children out of school to work. In this way they can support themselves and attend school the rest of the year." To some extent this attitude was found in other areas, although it should be said that relief administrators for the most part approved strict enforcement of both compulsory-school-attendance and child-labor standards.

In Wyoming several school officials stated that they desired to enforce compulsory-school-attendance requirements but were helpless to obtain the necessary legal support during the beet season because influential interests in the community would block their efforts. One school superintendent explained the nonenforcement of school attendance in his district to the investigator in this way: "When I first came to this district from another State several years ago I was shocked at the amount of absence and tried to get the children into school. I brought a case up to court and did not get to first base. They said: 'Don't you know that this area and this town depend on the beet industry and you can't do this?' " Another superintendent reported that in the fall of 1935 the county attorney refused to take a case of absence for beet work, with the advice that the case be dropped since the father said he would send the boy to school when the harvest was finished and since the father claimed the boy was 16 although, it was stated, the school records showed him to be only 13. The tendency to delay action in case of absence for beet work on the ground that the harvest season would soon be over was found also in other localities.

Despite reluctance to enforce school-attendance standards, the children of beet laborers in practically all localities visited were accepted and usually welcomed into the schools. It was usual for children of migratory workers to be accepted into the schools on the same basis as children of permanent residents of the school district, and in no case were children in migratory families found to have been refused admittance to school. A more common distinction in the application of school-attendance standards than that of permanent and seasonal residence in the school district was that made between "whites" and "Mexicans." The extreme situation in disregarding compulsory-attendance standards occurred in those few schools that reported that they did not encourage the children of Mexican and Spanish-American beet workers to enroll in school at all. One superintendent explained that the matter was carefully considered by the school board several years ago and that he and the board felt that it would be far too expensive for the community to furnish teachers and equipment sufficient to care for them. However, he reported that these children are accepted if they come to school of their own

accord and that they are then expected to attend regularly except when doing beet work. In this particular instance children resident in the school district the year round were referred to.

Another example of failure to enforce school-attendance laws that affected chiefly children of Spanish-speaking beet workers was found in one Wyoming locality. There the schools at their discretion refused to admit children who did not enroll within the first 15 days of the school term. For instance, in one Mexican family of beet laborers that was permanently resident in this locality, two children, one 6 and one 8 years of age, were refused admittance to school in the fall of 1934 when applying several weeks after the school term had opened. This meant that when the children were finally admitted early in September 1935 the older of the two was entering the first grade at the age of 9 years, 2 years overage for her grade.

Despite the frequent unwillingness or inability of school officials to have school attendance enforced by legal action many of them did earnestly attempt to get and keep the children in school. In a number of localities it was understood that parents must obtain a special excuse for children to be out of school for beet work, and in this way many parents would agree with the school officials to limit the period of absence to perhaps 2 or 3 weeks instead of letting the absence extend over a longer period. In Michigan such permission often would be granted by school officials with the understanding that the child would attend school on rainy or stormy days when he did not work. One school principal reported that he introduced the system of special permission to be absent during a few harvest weeks to encourage children to stay in town as much as possible and to enroll promptly when the school term opened in the fall.

Of the areas visited the three outstanding because of their policies and programs of strict enforcement of school attendance for beet workers' children during the beet season were the two in Montana and the one in southern Michigan, the same three areas previously mentioned as having the highest proportion of children enrolling in school before the close of the harvest season.

In southern Michigan the policy of strict enforcement of school attendance was reported to have been of long standing in the county visited. Approval by the local school board of permission for absence because of beet labor was required in each individual case, and no permission for absence was even considered for children under 14 years of age. In Montana the policy of strict enforcement of compulsory school attendance had been developed recently through the consistent efforts of school officials. Enforcement of attendance requirements was reported to be greatly aided there by the system of apportioning State financial aid to local schools, allocated on the basis of average enrollment of pupils for each month. The rural schools could not well object to caring for children of migratory beet workers on the ground of expense, for the amount of State aid per pupil was enough to cover the cost of books and incidentals; and the individual schools did not have enough extra children from migratory beet laborers' families to require an additional teacher or additional equipment.

An administrative aid to enforcement of school-attendance standards, which was used in a few Montana localities, was the formal employment certificate previously mentioned in connection with

problems of obtaining compliance with child-labor standards. However, in localities not using such employment certificates children were required to obtain special permission for absence for beet work. The chief problems of attendance in Montana occurred among the children who lived in towns or cities in the winter and on farms through the working season; for, despite the general policies of strict enforcement of school attendance during the beet season in the Montana counties visited, some few rural school districts in these counties were lax in requiring school attendance for the children of beet workers.

The experience of Montana and southern Michigan in obtaining relatively successful enforcement of school-attendance standards suggests that there is nothing inherent in the sugar-beet industry to require a lapse in enforcement of school-attendance standards during the beet season, as school officials in some localities apparently had come to believe. On the contrary it shows that some sugar-beet-producing communities do support a policy of requiring beet workers' children to observe the same high standards of school attendance as other children in the community and that the beet growers are proud of it. One county superintendent, supported by growers of his community, reported that the community was thoroughly back of the school program, that there was little difficulty in setting standards for attendance, and that no difference was made between Mexican children and others in demanding attendance.

SPECIAL CLASSES AND MODIFIED SCHOOL TERMS FOR BEET WORKERS' CHILDREN

With nonattendance at school during the beet season common among children of beet workers in many localities, the return of these children in large numbers to school after the harvesting of the beet crop has seriously disrupted the work of the schools in many places. "All children in the community are hurt, so far as the school is concerned, because when children who have been out topping return, the whole school is disorganized and the teachers have to give extra attention to those who have been out," as one beet grower interested in the school problems of the community commented. As a result the schools have made various adaptations of their programs to minimize the disruption caused by the demand for children to be released from school attendance during the harvest period.

Principals and teachers in many schools reported that special assistance was given to the beet workers' children who had been absent, to help them make up the school work missed. Special "make-up classes" were occasionally reported. In contrast to the general willingness of the schools to allow such special attention was the attitude in a few schools which reported that little or no effort was made to help these children. One superintendent commented that if children are absent only a week or so the teachers help them make up the work, but if they stay out longer "we do not pay any more attention to them than if they were not there."

A less frequent but more drastic approach to the problem of absence of beet workers' children than incidental help with lessons missed has been an adjustment of the school term to allow "beet vacations" during the harvest season. The days lost by such a "beet vacation" have often been made up in a summer session of the school.

Sometimes summer classes have also been provided where the school as a whole observed no "beet vacation" but where a number of children planned to be out for the fall beet work. These summer classes would start 6 weeks or so before the regular school term. In some schools the special classes have continued through September, so that the children who had attended these classes would be at the same point in their studies as the children not absent for beet work when returning to school after the harvest. Other schools, however, would disband such a "beet vacation" class at the opening of the regular school term, and the children that had attended the class would repeat the work of the first month of the term and then completely miss the second month's work. In a few instances, schools would merely defer their opening until after the harvest was over without attempting to make up the 2 months' lost time.

Of the 2,014 children between 6 and 16 years of age on September 1, 1935, in the families interviewed, only 29 were reported to have attended special summer classes in 1935, and in only one locality did children in the family attend a school that did not open until after the harvest season ended. The 29 children referred to went to special summer classes held in Sidney, Mont., and Scottsbluff, Nebr. In Scottsbluff one of the schools opened early in November 1935 and enrolled only children who had not attended summer school or a full-term school before the close of the harvest period. One small town in Wyoming was the only locality visited where the entire school population had a "beet vacation" in the fall of 1935. The 2 weeks' time so lost was to be made up by eliminating the Christmas holidays and by having school on several Saturdays through the winter.

In several other localities visited during the course of the study, all in northern Colorado and central Michigan, "summer schools" had been held and "beet vacations" observed in 1934 or previous years. One reason for discontinuing them in 1935, as explained by school officials, was that they expected the child-labor limitations of the Government contracts to reduce the number of children in beet work. Financial and other reasons also appeared to be operating to reduce the number of summer schools and special classes. One school superintendent explained that he had eliminated the summer session and "beet vacation" because he felt that, in giving the children this opportunity to make up their school work, the schools were only encouraging parents to take children into the beet fields to work. It may be said in behalf of the summer session, however, that even though tending to encourage the use of children in the beet fields, it has represented a conscientious effort by local school boards to make the best of a situation in which it was felt that children must be allowed to be absent to work in the fields during the school term. Feeling the value of the summer session from the point of view of the children in lessening the seriousness of absence, officials of some schools that had recently given up summer classes expressed regret that they had not held a summer session in 1935, since the children were out anyway and they felt that retardation was almost certain to result.

SCHOOL PROGRESS

Despite efforts by schools and extra help given children by individual school teachers to compensate for extended school absences, beet laborers' children have suffered materially in school progress. In St. Paul, Minn., for instance, where spring absences for beet work as well as fall absences of 2 months' duration were common, one school principal stated that children whose parents take them to the beet fields can expect to complete only one semester of work in a year; that in the fall they enter the same grade that they left in the spring; and that their promotion in a year is limited to one-half grade each January. This situation illustrates an extreme effect of absences on school progress and retardation. On the other hand, some children with an intense interest in their school work did succeed by extra application in keeping up with their class, despite frequent absences for work.

The extent of retardation among the beet laborers' children included in this study is indicated by the grade the children were in (or were expecting to be in) during the fall term of 1935, considered in relation to their age at the beginning of the school year. In accordance with common practice a child is considered to be of normal age for his school grade if he is in that grade which he would have reached if he started the first grade of school at 6 or 7 years of age and progressed regularly one grade a year. A child is considered advanced in grade if he is in a higher grade than one of the two grades considered normal for his age, and he is considered overage or retarded if he is in a lower grade. A child of less than 8 years of age cannot be considered retarded according to this definition; therefore the presentation of data on retardation of children in the families visited is limited to children 8 and under 16 years of age. It is also limited to those enrolled in school, or expecting to enroll, in the school year 1935–36. The number of children between 8 and 16 years of age for whom progress is thus reported totals 1,382.

Slightly more than half (51 percent) of the 1,382 children for whom progress in school was reported were retarded in school grade, and not quite half (44 percent) were in one of the grades normal for their age. Only about 1 in 20 (4 percent) was advanced in grade. Table 18 shows the progress of children at each age. At 8 years of age 32 percent were retarded, indicating that these children were in only the first grade. The proportion retarded rose with each added year of age, and at 15 years 72 percent of those still attending school were retarded or overage for their grade. The retardation was 3 or more years for 37 percent of the 15-year-old children, meaning that they were in the sixth or a lower grade, whereas the normal grade for their age was either the ninth or the tenth. Moreover, the full significance of the loss of school time on the school achievement of beet workers' children is not shown in these retardation figures, since several school officials reported that even though the beet workers' children did not complete the work of a grade satisfactorily, they were advanced to the next grade or at least were not required to repeat a grade more than once. It was felt to be more important to the children to be in a class where they would have social contacts with other children near their own age than to be able to do their school work satisfactorily.

TABLE 18.—*Progress in school of children of specified age in families of beet laborers*

Age of child	Children 8 and under 16 years of age [1]															
	Total	Enrolled or expected to enroll during the school year 1935–36													Progress not reported	Not enrolled nor expected to enroll
		Total	Progress reported	Retarded								Normal		Advanced		
				Total		1 year		2 years		3 or more years						
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total	1,552	1,422	1,382	711	51.4	316	22.9	191	13.8	204	14.7	609	44.1	62	4.5	40	130
8 years	184	180	179	58	32.4	58	32.4					110	61.5	11	6.1	1	4
9 years	208	197	193	75	38.9	49	25.4	26	13.5			110	57.0	8	4.1	4	11
10 years	191	189	183	88	48.1	36	19.7	35	19.1	17	9.3	83	45.3	12	6.6	6	2
11 years	194	189	182	90	49.4	31	17.0	34	18.7	25	13.7	84	46.2	8	4.4	7	5
12 years	188	185	181	102	56.3	44	24.3	22	12.1	36	19.9	68	37.6	11	6.1	4	3
13 years	184	171	165	96	58.2	32	19.4	27	16.4	37	22.4	67	40.6	2	1.2	6	13
14 years	210	181	174	112	64.4	43	24.7	26	15.0	43	24.7	57	32.7	5	2.9	7	29
15 years	193	130	125	90	72.0	23	18.4	21	16.8	46	36.8	30	24.0	5	4.0	5	63

[1] Age on Sept. 1, 1935.

The school-attendance policies prevailing in the various areas visited and the use of special summer classes in the past as well as the proportions of migratory families and of families of Mexican origin were reflected in the proportions of children retarded in the different areas. Southern Michigan and Sidney, Mont., which had policies of strict enforcement of compulsory-school-attendance standards, head the list with relatively little retardation among the children included in the study.

Southern Minnesota, where all the families visited were migratory, had the largest proportion retarded, seven out of eight children between 8 and 16 years of age in the families visited by the Children's Bureau being overage or retarded in school grade. The two areas of southern Colorado had only slightly less retardation than southern Minnesota. The proportion of children of the age group covered that were retarded in each area visited was as follows:

	Percent retarded [1]
All areas	51
Southern Michigan	21
Sidney, Mont	30
Central Michigan	38
Western Nebraska	46
Northern Colorado	47
Southern Montana	49
Northern Wyoming	57
Arkansas Valley, Colo	77
Western Slope, Colo	80
Southern Minnesota	88

[1] The numbers on which these percentages are based appear in appendix table V, p. 88.

The children in Russian-German families were found to have much better records in both school attendance and school progress than the children in Spanish-speaking families. With respect to enrollment in school, for instance, 83 percent of the children in Russian-German families enrolled or were expected to enroll in school in 1935 before the close of the topping season, compared with 57 percent of the children in Spanish-speaking families; 6 and 10 percent, respectively, of the children of the two racial groups were not expecting to enroll at all. With respect to retardation, 25 percent of the children in Russian-German families between 8 and 16 years of age were retarded, as compared with 70 percent of those in the Spanish-speaking families. It is probably not unrelated to these differences in school attendance and progress in the groups of different racial stock that the Russian-German families came earlier to the beet-growing areas and are more nearly assimilated in the communities culturally than most of the Mexicans and many of the Spanish-Americans. The comment of the 18-year-old Russian-German boy in the tenth grade who said, "I want to have an education good enough not to work beets," was characteristic of his Russian-German racial group.

Although the Spanish-speaking children were often retarded in school grade, several school teachers interviewed commented on the exceptional interest and ability of many of them in art or music. They were said to be quite interested in arithmetic because they knew it would be useful to them in connection with their work, but they were said to be poor in history and civics. The fact that the Spanish-speaking children were lacking in background for these latter school subjects is suggested by the answer to a test question which a grade-school teacher said she received from many of her Spanish-speaking pupils. The question was, "Why did the English colonize America?"; the answer, "To get beet contracts."

Repeated failure to be promoted and the resulting situation of children feeling themselves too old and too big for their grade contributed to an early dropping out of school among beet laborers' children. As the children reached high-school age, lack of lunch money and suitable clothing, added to irregular attendance, retardation, and parental indifference to education, were obstacles too great for many to overcome. It was usual for the children of Mexicans and Spanish-Americans to drop out of school before reaching high school, and the high-school graduation of one was sufficiently rare to occasion special comment by a number of the school officials interviewed.

FAMILY WORK AND INCOME

The family occupation, it has been seen, governs in many ways the lives of the children of beet laborers as well as the lives of their parents. It is obviously responsible for the use of child labor in the beet fields and certainly in considerable part for their deprivation of full school opportunities—grave handicaps for children growing up to adulthood and citizenship in the United States. These effects of the family occupation on the children, however, result largely from the circumstance that most laborers in the occupation live from day to day in the face of poverty and often in the face of destitution, save for such aid as relief agencies may extend to them. So faced with the immediate exigency of securing food and shelter, the families often placed the children's welfare second to the effort to earn a living and to achieve a modicum of self-respect.

It is appropriate, therefore, in a consideration of the welfare of the children of beet laborers, to examine more closely the fundamentals of the wage-earning economy of the families that are dependent on hand labor in the beet fields for a livelihood. Such consideration may be suggestive of ways of achieving for the children in these families the opportunities deemed to be the right of all children in this country.

The time which the families spent on beet work, the number of acres of beets on which they performed the hand-labor processes, the wage rates they received for their beet work, and the amount of supplementary work and income they obtained, all contribute to the picture of the efforts that these families made to earn a living in an occupation of irregular and seasonal employment.

AMOUNT OF FAMILIES' WORK IN THE BEET FIELDS

The beet work that a family performs, in terms of days of work and of acres handled, is basic in determining and restricting family income. The amount of time that a laborer can spend during the year on the work of the beet fields is limited, yet in practice beet labor involves the year-round presence of most of the seasonal workers. Labor in the beet fields is performed at intervals over a period of about 6 months and requires the presence of the beet laborers over much, if not all, of this period when alternative agricultural work might be available. Then during the 6 months of winter and early spring they have in recent years been likely to remain in the beet-growing locality because they cannot afford to go elsewhere and because no other industry either in the beet-growing locality or elsewhere demands the labor of these people, whose chief employment qualifications are a knack for handling beets and a willingness to accept hard, monotonous labor.

Duration of work in beet fields.

Information on days worked was obtained for the fathers in these families as well as for the working children. The number of days worked in the entire season was obtained only for families visited after

they had completed their harvest work and therefore represents conditions only in the areas visited after the families had completed the season's work; that is, those in the eastern beet region and those visited in the Wyoming and Montana areas of the Mountain States beet region. Data covering the entire working season were not available for the Colorado and Nebraska areas visited, but figures on days of work at thinning and hoeing show these areas to be more similar to the other Mountain States areas in length of working periods than to the eastern areas (see appendix table VI, p. 89).

The median number of days worked in the beet fields was 56 for the 405 fathers of families reporting on total days worked in these six areas. The problem of obtaining a large enough acreage of beets to provide a maximum amount of employment during the brief working periods was an immediate one to many families of beet laborers, particularly those in the Mountain States beet region. The desire of the farmers to have their work done within a brief period of time when it can be performed most advantageously has the effect of shortening the working season to the extent warranted by the supply of labor. The great variation in the length of the working season among the families interviewed suggests that many did not have all the work they could have done if more had been available to them and time had been allowed for its performance. In the three eastern areas the median number of working days of the father or other head of the household was 68 and in the three Mountain States areas, 48. This parallels closely the median number of days worked by the children under 16 in these same areas.

The wide range in number of days worked in the 1935 season by these 405 fathers is shown in the following distribution:

Days worked	*Percent* [1] *3 eastern areas*	*3 Mountain States areas*
Less than 20	3. 6	10. 0
20, less than 30	3. 6	11. 4
30, less than 40	7. 2	12. 4
40, less than 50	11. 3	21. 4
50, less than 60	9. 7	19. 5
60, less than 70	19. 5	16. 2
70, less than 80	15. 4	5. 2
80, less than 90	15. 4	2. 9
90 or more	14. 3	1. 0

[1] The numbers on which these percentages are based, appear in appendix table VI, p. 89.

In every area visited for which the information was obtained there were some fathers of families who were doing beet work on at least 70 days of the year, suggesting that this number of working days, if not more, was a generally feasible amount of employment at beet labor. Total working time was as much as 95 or more days for the season for 10 percent of the fathers reporting in the areas of Michigan and Minnesota, although such long duration of work was rare in the areas of the Mountain States beet region, only one father having worked for so long a period. Earlier and more severe winters in the beet-growing region of the Mountain States accounted in part for this difference, as did also the relatively more abundant supply of beet laborers in the Mountain States areas visited. The comparatively plentiful labor supply there in 1935 was due to the smaller-than-usual plantings of beets in Colorado and Nebraska and southern

Montana and the fair opportunities for industrial employment in the eastern areas that year.

The number of days that the fathers of families spent at the various hand-labor processes in the beet fields of the eastern and Mountain States areas were as follows:

Area and process	Families reporting days father worked at process	50 per-cent of the fathers worked less than—	90 per-cent of the fathers worked less than—
Thinning:			
All areas	797	21 days	32 days
3 eastern areas	189	24	37
7 Mountain States areas	608	19	29
Hoeing:			
All areas	687	13	26
3 eastern areas	185	18	34
7 Mountain States areas	502	11	23
Topping:			
6 areas [1]	394	22	35
3 eastern areas	185	25	40
3 Mountain States areas [1]	209	21	28
All processes performed:			
6 areas [1]	405	56	88
3 eastern areas	195	68	95
3 Mountain States areas [1]	210	48	69

[1] Exclusive of the three areas in Colorado and western Nebraska, visited before families had completed the harvest work.

It will be noted that at each process the number of days at work in the beet fields tended to be appreciably longer for the fathers in the eastern areas than for those in the Mountain States beet region.

The daily hours of work for adults were very long, often longer even than the hours which have been reported for children under 16 years of age that worked in the beet fields. For thinning and topping the hours of work were greatest. Usual daily hours were reported to be at least 12 a day at thinning for half the fathers of the families and at least 11 hours a day at topping for half (see appendix table VII, p. 89).

Acreage handled.

In 1935 the median number of acres of sugar beets worked at the thinning process by the 746 families reporting acreage worked was 18, half of these families handling more and half less than this amount. The variation in amount of acreage handled by the individual families was even wider than the variation in time worked, the greater variation depending, to a considerable extent, on the different numbers of workers in the families. The wide spread in the number of acres of sugar beets thinned in 1935 by the different families is shown by the following distribution:

	Percent [1]
Less than 10 acres per family	20
10, less than 20	36
20, less than 30	19
30 acres and more	25

[1] The numbers on which these percentages are based appear in appendix table VIII, p. 90.

The system often used in the Mountain States areas of having more persons than the members of one family work under one contract of a known acreage caused some difficulty in obtaining exact information on acreage handled by the families involved. When members of two

or more families performed the hand labor on the acreage covered by one labor contract, they usually mingled in one working group, so that the report of acreage worked by such families is only an estimate of the proportion of the entire known acreage handled by each. The number of acres herein reported as handled by such families is the number for which they received the acreage wage. A common method used by the families to estimate acreage handled by each family as the basis for apportioning the total wage fairly was to rate each individual worker in terms of the performance of one adult man: "Half a man" for a child under 14, sometimes "half a man" for a woman, and "a whole man" for the others. No attempt was made in the study to estimate acreage for families that hired laborers whom they paid by the day or for families whose members worked on a daily-wage basis in the beet fields.

Families with labor contracts tended to work on many more acres than those working only as extra help; the median was 21 acres at thinning for the former families and 9 acres for the latter (see appendix table IX, p. 91).

There was likewise a great difference in the acreage handled by the Spanish-speaking families and by the Russian-Germans. At the thinning process, for instance, the median acreage handled by the former was 15, in contrast to a median of 29 acres for the latter. It is interesting to note, in this connection, the larger proportion of family members working in the beet fields among the Russian-German families than among the Spanish-speaking families—58 percent working of all persons in the Russian-German families in contrast to 41 percent in the Spanish-speaking families.

That local conditions affected the amount of beet acreage worked by these families is indicated by the differences in the median acreage thinned, which ranged from 9 acres for families in Arkansas Valley, Colo., to 36 acres for families in southern Michigan. The median number of acres thinned by the families in the various areas, listed in order, is as follows: [1]

	Median number of acres thinned
Arkansas Valley, Colo	9
Southern Montana	16
Northern Colorado	16
Southern Minnesota	17
Northern Wyoming	19
Western Nebraska	21
Central Michigan	28
Southern Michigan	36

It will be observed that the families in central and southern Michigan tended to handle considerably larger tracts of sugar beets than the families in southern Minnesota or those of any of the areas visited in the Mountain States beet region, following in a general way the difference in number of days worked by the fathers of families.

A more accurate appraisal of area differences of worker capacity under existing local conditions than that indicated in family figures can be obtained from figures on the average acreage handled by individual workers. With the factor of the varying number of workers per family eliminated, these figures show, for full-time workers, an

[1] The numbers on which these medians are based appear in appendix table VIII, p. 90.

average of 7.9 acres at thinning for all areas combined and area differences as follows:

	Average number of acres thinned per full-time worker [1]
All areas	7.9
Arkansas Valley, Colo	5.3
Western Slope, Colo	5.3
Northern Colorado	6.7
Southern Montana	6.9
Sidney, Mont	7.9
Northern Wyoming	8.3
Central Michigan	8.5
Southern Minnesota	8.8
Western Nebraska	8.8
Southern Michigan	12.6

[1] Based on 1,485 family members of all ages that worked at thinning full time; that is, worked for at least 7 hours a day on approximately as many days as any other member of the family. These figures are arithmetic averages and not medians. Corresponding figures for the other processes appear in appendix table X, p. 92.

The longer growing season of Michigan made possible the handling of exceptionally large acreages per worker in the southern Michigan area, an average of 12.6 acres for each full-time worker. However, it is also significant that southern Michigan was the only area surveyed in which the sugar-beet laborers had a collective agreement with the farmers of the area and through it some control over the number of beet workers hired. At the opposite extreme in number of acres handled per person were the two areas in southern Colorado where there was an abundant supply of experienced beet laborers and an average of 5.3 acres was handled by each full-time worker.

The figures which have been presented on acreage worked are for the thinning process. In general, acreage handled at the hoeing process, both per family and per worker, was a little higher than the thinning acreage, because fewer families and fewer workers were engaged in hoeing. Topping acreage, on the whole, tended to approximate thinning acreage. Some families, able to obtain a larger contract than they could handle alone, hired extra help for thinning and topping but did the hoeing work on the entire acreage themselves. Altogether 97 percent of the families interviewed worked at the thinning process and 86 percent did some hoeing work; and of those interviewed after the harvest season was under way, 97 percent worked at the topping process.

DIFFERENCES IN ACREAGE WORKED PER FAMILY AND IN USE OF HIRED HELP, 1934 AND 1935

It might be expected that the restrictions on the use of child labor would have reduced to some extent the acreage handled by the families in 1935. Some families reported to the investigators that they did not obtain as much acreage to work as they would have obtained if their children under 14 years had been permitted to work in the beet fields in 1935; and, as a matter of fact, the acreage of many families was reduced in 1935 from that handled in 1934. However, other factors appeared to be more important than decrease in the use of child labor, chiefly the smaller-than-average plantings of sugar beets in a number of the areas visited. The smaller plantings in southern Montana, for instance, were due to a "farmers' strike" against the price offered for

beets, and in northern Colorado and western Nebraska to dissatisfaction with the price offered for beets, to relatively good prices for alternative crops, and to a relatively small supply of water for irrigation purposes.

In 1934 the median acreage thinned per family by the 714 families reporting on beet work done in the 1934 season had been 21 acres, in contrast to a median of 18 acres reported by 746 families in 1935. Only in the southern Michigan area was the median acreage thinned conspicuously greater in 1935 than in 1934, an increase of 8 acres per family in the median amount, which is shown in table 19, giving the median amounts for each area for the 2 years. The comparatively small number of families whose reduced working capacity was clearly due to the provisions of the 1935 Government contracts prescribing a 14-year minimum age is indicated by the small proportion of families (15 percent) that had one or more children under 14 years of age who had worked in the beet fields in 1934 but who did not work in 1935. Another indication of the probable minor importance of child labor as a cause of this decrease in acreage handled per family is the absence of any decided relationship between the decrease in median acreage thinned per family and the decrease in the proportion of children 6 and under 14 who were working in the various areas. For instance, in western Nebraska there was a decrease from 52 to 13 percent in the proportion of children of these ages who worked in the beet fields, whereas the median acreage thinned decreased only from 23 to 21. In southern Michigan, on the other hand, the proportion of children 6 and under 14 years who worked in the beet fields decreased from 25 to 12 percent, whereas the median acreage thinned increased from 28 to 36.

TABLE 19.—*Median acreage thinned by families in each area, 1934 and 1935*

Area	1934		1935	
	Number of families reporting	Median acreage thinned	Number of families reporting	Median acreage thinned
All areas	714	21	746	18
Central Michigan	80	29	86	28
Southern Michigan	39	28	39	36
Southern Minnesota	70	19	72	17
Northern Colorado	120	21	121	16
Arkansas Valley, Colo	48	10	67	9
Western Slope, Colo	45	15	46	14
Western Nebraska	77	23	77	21
Northern Wyoming	122	22	134	19
Southern Montana	71	22	63	16
Sidney, Mont	42	19	41	15

There is some indication that in 1935 the provisions restricting the use of children under 14 in the beet fields increased the use of hired help by laborers under contract. There was an appreciable increase in 1935 both in the number of families hiring extra help and in the number of persons hired per family. Of the families that worked beets in 1934 (excluding the few that were working as day laborers), 32 percent hired some extra help to assist with their beet work, whereas 38 percent

hired such extra help in 1935.[2] Information obtained on the maximum number of persons hired by the families at any one time to help with the beet work shows that the average number hired by families that used any extra help was also somewhat greater in 1935 (2.9 persons hired) than in 1934 (2.4 persons hired). (See appendix table XI, p. 93.) These figures are presented as having a possible bearing on the child-labor restrictions, but the increase in the use of extra help in 1935 may reflect other conditions, such as increased pressure to complete the work in a short period due to the relatively large available labor supply and small planting of beets in 1935.

In a few of the Russian-German families that might have been expected to hire extra help to compensate for the loss of a child's services, the mother took the child's place in the fields. Among the families interviewed as a whole, however, there was no appreciable difference between 1934 and 1935 in the proportion of mothers working.

WAGE RATES

The families were paid for their work in the sugar-beet fields according to acreage worked, so that the number of acres they handled and the wage rate per acre they received determined their money return for the beet labor performed. The wage rates in the areas visited were usually a fixed amount per acre for the thinning and hoeing work and a sliding scale according to yield for the harvest work.[3] In some areas the prevailing wages paid were the minimum rates set by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the authority given him under the production-adjustment contracts between sugar-beet growers and the Government to establish minimum-wage rates by district. This authority was exercised in 1935, however, only for certain districts in the Mountain States beet region. Six of the ten areas included in this study were affected by minimum-wage determinations; namely, northern Colorado, Arkansas Valley, Colo., western Nebraska, northern Wyoming, and the two Montana areas. No minimum-wage rate was set for the Western Slope area of Colorado nor for any part of the eastern beet region.[4]

The 1935 wage determination for northern Colorado and western Nebraska provided a wage rate of $19.50 an acre (on a normal 12-ton yield) made up as follows:

For blocking and thinning	per acre	$7. 50
For first hoeing	do	1. 75
For second hoeing or weeding	do	1. 25
For pulling and topping	per ton	[1] 0. 75

[1] 75 cents a ton for each ton up to and including 12 tons per acre, and 60 cents a ton for each ton above 12 per acre.

[2] This percentage for 1935 may be a slight understatement of the true proportion for these families because some of them were visited before the completion of the topping work. For this latter group the maximum number of persons hired refers to extra help hired at the thinning and hoeing seasons only. It may be thought that these figures on the number of families hiring extra help make it appear that families working as extra help were underrepresented among the 946 families included in this study. However, it should be noted that the persons working as extra help were often either individuals from beet laborers' families that had completed their own beet work under a labor contract and have been classified as contract families or were unattached solo migrants not included in the scope of the study.

[3] Of the 765 families interviewed that had contracts for beet labor in 1935, 7 were working for a share of the crop, 20 or 25 percent of the beets produced, without any agreed wage per acre; all these families were in northern Colorado. In 1934 the proportion working for a share of the crop was larger than in 1935, when the minimum-wage determinations under the Jones-Costigan Act were in substance applicable to such share contracts. In 1934, 32 out of 725 families with labor contracts reported having done beet work on a share basis.

[4] Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Press release, April 20, 1935. (Mimeographed.)

In Arkansas Valley, Colo., the rate set was lower, totaling $17.50 an acre (on a 10-ton yield, normal for the area); and in northern Wyoming and Montana the minimum-wage rate established was higher, totaling $21.50 an acre (on a normal yield of 12 tons). In the Western Slope area of Colorado, where no rate was set under Government contracts in 1935, the prevailing rate was $18.50 (on a yield of 10 to 14 tons per acre).

Wage rates paid in the unirrigated eastern areas, where an 8-ton yield is considered normal, tended to be less per acre than those paid in the irrigated Mountain States beet region but carried a minimum for topping work and usually an additional amount per ton harvested above a certain yield per acre.[5] The prevailing rates in southern Minnesota and central Michigan were $15 to $16 an acre for an 8-ton yield, and in southern Michigan, where the beet laborers' union had a collective agreement with the growers, the prevailing rate paid was $19 regardless of the yield.

The wage rates paid in 1935 were higher than those prevailing in the respective areas in 1934 in all the areas visited except Minnesota and central Michigan, where there was little or no change.

Actual earnings per acre, when differences in wage rates and in yields were taken into account, were found to range in 1934 from $4 to $24 an acre and in 1935 from $10 to $25 an acre for families in the six areas from which data on earnings were obtained for that year.[6] The spread in earnings per acre in each year for the different areas is shown in appendix table XII (p. 94).

It is interesting to note, by way of comparison with the wage rates for 1934 and 1935, what the prevailing wage rates per acre were in 1920 when the Children's Bureau's earlier study was made. In that year, when wage rates were probably highest in the history of the industry,[7] the prevailing rate for beet labor was $35 an acre in the northern Colorado localities visited and $33 and $35 an acre in the Michigan localities visited.[8]

EARNINGS FOR BEET WORK

Family earnings.

At the wage rates paid in 1935, half of the 374 families reporting the information received not more than $340 a year for the beet work done by all members of the family, a sum far from adequate to support them through the year even on a subsistence level. These 374 families represent 6 of the 10 areas included in the survey—the 2 Michigan areas, southern Minnesota, northern Wyoming, and the 2 Montana areas. The other 4 areas were visited before earnings for the entire 1935 season were known. In those areas (western Nebraska and the three in Colorado) family earnings for beet labor tended to be lower than in the 6 areas reporting, judging from the relative earnings of the families for the summer-work processes only (thinning and hoeing). The families in the 4 areas in Colorado and Nebraska reported median earnings for summer work of $160, in contrast to a median of $220 earned for summer work by families in the 6 areas for which yearly

[5] Wages, Employment Conditions, and Welfare of Sugar-Beet Laborers (prepared by the Children's Bureau). Monthly Labor Review, February 1938, p. 334.

[6] Central Michigan, southern Michigan, southern Minnesota, northern Wyoming, southern Montana, and Sidney, Mont.

[7] Taylor, Paul S.: Mexican Labor in the United States Valley of the South Platte, p. 142.

[8] Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, pp. 61, 112. Children's Bureau Publication 115. Washington, 1923.

earnings for 1935 are also reported (table 20). These figures on summer-work earnings include the so-called hold-back of $1 to $2 an acre that was earned for summer work but was not paid to the worker until after the harvest work was completed. Roughly speaking, earnings for summer work amount to slightly more than half the entire season's earnings, the exact relationship depending on the portion of the rate assigned to each process in the different localities and the yield where a sliding scale is used for topping.

TABLE 20.—*Median earnings from all beet work done and median earnings from summer work only, by families of beet laborers in each area, 1935*

Area	Median earnings for all work done in season		Median earnings for summer work only	
	Families reporting	Amount	Families reporting	Amount
Total			[1] 884	$190
Areas with reports for all processes worked	374	$340	484	220
Central Michigan	111	400	94	220
Southern Michigan	42	600	39	360
Southern Minnesota	74	240	74	160
Northern Wyoming	26	450	140	240
Southern Montana	66	250	82	180
Sidney, Mont	55	340	55	230
Areas with reports for summer work only			400	160
Northern Colorado			183	160
Arkansas Valley, Colo			68	80
Western Slope, Colo			51	150
Western Nebraska			98	220

[1] Excludes 25 families doing no summer work and 37 not reporting earnings from summer work.

The previous discussion of the amount of beet work performed by the families interviewed leads one to expect great variations in the amounts of money the families earned for their beet work. The distribution of the earnings of the 374 families reporting yearly earnings for beet work done in 1935 shows that more than a fourth of them were earning less than $200 and that nearly a fourth earned $600 or more. A few of these families, particularly among those earning less than $200 in the year for beet work, did not, however, perform beet labor at every process in the season's work. Of the 311 families that reported earnings and that did perform some beet labor in 1935 at each process, including a second hoeing, if required, 18 percent earned less than $200 and 26 percent earned $600 or more, as shown in table 21. For these families the median yearly earnings for beet work were $410. The Spanish-speaking families, averaging fewer workers per family and decidedly smaller acreages than the Russian-German families, tended to have lower earnings for beet work—median earnings of $260 a year in contrast to median earnings of $520 for the Russian-German families reporting.

TABLE 21.—*Yearly earnings of families from beet labor in six areas, 1935*

Yearly earnings from beet labor	Total families [1]		Families performing beet labor at all processes [2]		Families performing beet labor at part of processes only	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	530		445		85	
Earnings reported	374	100.0	311	100.0	63	100.0
Less than $100	32	8.6	2	0.6	30	47.6
$100, less than $200	77	20.6	55	17.7	22	34.9
$200, less than $300	54	14.4	45	14.5	9	14.3
$300, less than $400	51	13.6	50	16.1	1	1.6
$400, less than $500	43	11.5	43	13.8		
$500, less than $600	35	9.4	34	10.9	1	1.6
$600, less than $1,000	66	17.6	66	21.2		
$1,000 or more	16	4.3	16	5.2		
Earnings not reported	156		134		22	
Median	$340		$410		$100	

[1] Families in central Michigan, southern Michigan, southern Minnesota, northern Wyoming, southern Montana, and Sidney, Mont.
[2] Including second hoeing where required.

Information with respect to earnings from beet work done in 1934 by the families interviewed in 1935 shows that despite some increase in wage rates and earnings per acre in certain areas there was no general increase in seasonal earnings in 1935, the first year in which the labor provisions of the Government contracts were in effect (table 22). In the Mountain States beet region the tendency toward smaller acreages in 1935 than in 1934 outweighed the increase in wage rates; and in the two eastern areas, where there was little change either in median acreages or in wage rates (central Michigan and southern Minnesota), median earnings for beet labor were approximately the same in both years. Only in southern Michigan, where there was a collective agreement between workers in 1935 and where there were increases in wage rates and in average acreage handled per family (see appendix table XII, p. 94, and table 19, p. 59), were yearly earnings significantly higher in 1935 than in 1934.

Individual earnings.

In half of the 374 families reporting, yearly earnings for beet work, if divided equally among all members working, amounted to not more than $129 per worker. For families in which no child under the age of 14 years assisted with the beet work the median was only a little higher—$135 per worker. In this latter group of families 31 percent had earnings of less than $100 a year per worker and only 22 percent had $200 or more.

TABLE 22.—*Median yearly earnings of families for beet labor, by area, 1934 and 1935*

Area	1934		1935	
	Number of families	Median yearly earnings	Number of families	Median yearly earnings
Total	[1] 783	$310		
6 areas	453	360	[2] 374	$340
3 eastern areas	202	350	227	360
Central Michigan	91	470	111	400
Southern Michigan	39	430	42	600
Southern Minnesota	72	260	74	240
3 Mountain State areas	251	360	147	320
Northern Wyoming	115	410	26	450
Southern Montana	81	350	66	250
Sidney, Mont	55	340	55	340
4 areas with no reports on 1935 yearly earnings	330	240		
Northern Colorado	152	250		
Arkansas Valley, Colo	49	110		
Western Slope, Colo	44	250		
Western Nebraska	85	300		

[1] Exclusive of 64 families who did not report earnings for beet labor in 1934.
[2] Exclusive of 416 families in areas visited before the close of the topping season and 156 families for whom earnings were not reported.

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK AND INCOME

The families of beet laborers interviewed for this study had for the most part no employment during 6 winter months to supplement their earnings from beet labor and had only occasional employment during the late summer, when the beet fields required little or no attention. The concentration of sugar-beet culture near a limited number of sugar factories meant for the most part a lack of opportunity for other employment in the off seasons.

Information was obtained from the families interviewed regarding all work done for hire or profit, other than beet labor, and all money income received from such work or from other sources by any members of the family in the period of approximately a year between the close of the harvest season in 1934 and the close of the 1935 season. For those families interviewed in the last 3 weeks of September 1935, namely those in Colorado, the information thus obtained represents such income for nearly, but not quite, a full year. There was obviously no opportunity for supplementary work for beet workers during the busy topping season.

Seven families out of eight reported that they had received some income in addition to that earned by beet labor or received as relief. The proportion of families in the various areas visited that had any such supplementary money income whatever in the period of approximately a year ranged from 71 to 96 percent, as follows:

	Percent
All areas	88
Southern Minnesota	71
Southern Montana	71
Central Michigan	87
Northern Wyoming	89
Sidney, Mont	89
Northern Colorado	[1] 91
Western Slope, Colo	[1] 94
Southern Michigan	95
Arkansas Valley, Colo	[1] 96
Western Nebraska	[1] 96

[1] Families were interviewed during or shortly before the harvest.

Although many of the families did obtain some little supplementary work, the money return for such work plus money income from any other source (other than beet work and relief) was nearly always very small when considered on a yearly basis. Of the 735 families that had any such income and that reported the amount, half received not more than $51 in the period of approximately a year, and less than a third reported supplemental money income of $100 or more (table 23). A typical situation was that of a Mexican family of 9 that earned $52 in the year besides what they received for their beet work. The father, 2 boys of 21 and 15, and a girl of 16, were hired by a farmer to pick potatoes at 3 cents a bushel. Each worked 8 days and they made $48 among them. The other $4 the father earned by 2 days' work at threshing.

TABLE 23.—*Money income of families supplementary to earnings for beet labor, 1935*

Supplementary money income [1]	Families interviewed	
	Number	Percent distribution
Total	[2] 943	100.0
No supplementary money income	116	12.3
Supplementary money income	827	87.7
Less than $20	153	16.2
$20, less than $40	157	16.6
$40, less than $60	92	9.8
$60, less than $80	71	7.5
$80, less than $100	48	5.1
$100, less than $200	98	10.4
$200 or more	116	12.3
Amount not reported	92	9.8

[1] Period between close of harvest season in 1934 and close of harvest season in 1935.
[2] Exclusive of 3 families not reporting whether they had received any supplementary money income.

The areas in which the largest amounts were earned by the families from supplementary work or were received from sources other than relief were the 2 in central Michigan. Among the 85 families in central Michigan that reported the amount of supplementary income, nearly half received less than $90 in the year and one-third, $200 or more.

The areas with the smallest amount of additional income were the Western Slope and Arkansas Valley areas of Colorado. In the Arkansas Valley, where 60 families reported the amount of supplementary income, the median amount was $31 per family, despite the fact that this area produces large quantities of onions, beans, cantaloupes, and other crops requiring considerable hand labor. Low wage rates for work at these other crops, frequently less than a dollar a day, and a plentiful labor supply account for the apparent discrepancy between available work and low earnings.

The most common source of supplementary income among all 946 families interviewed was agricultural labor on crops other than hand work on beets, 4 out of 5 families having had some such work in the period of approximately a year. The highest proportion of families with some supplementary agricultural work (93 percent) was in Arkansas Valley, Colo., and the smallest proportions were in southern Montana, central Michigan, and southern Minnesota, where the families with some agricultural work besides beet labor comprised 62 to 65 percent of those visited. Most of the agricultural work performed by the families on crops other than sugar beets was irregular and was limited chiefly to harvesting work. A small number of families had one member who worked as a regular farm hand on a monthly or a yearly basis.

The nonagricultural work done by the families of beet laborers in the Mountain States areas was sometimes work for the sugar factories which operate for only about 3 months of the year and sometimes the keeping of boarders during the beet season. In the eastern areas nonagricultural work obtained was frequently employment in sugar factories or in other industrial establishments. For all areas combined, however, only one family in three reported that any nonagricultural work was done by any member of the family during the period of approximately a year. Russian-Germans were able to obtain industrial and other nonagricultural employment much more easily than the Spanish-speaking workers. Indeed, 44 percent of the Russian-German families had some nonagricultural work, while only 21 percent of the Spanish-speaking families had any in the year. The areas in which the smallest proportion of families visited had any nonagricultural work were the Arkansas Valley and Western Slope of Colorado, 10 percent of the families in each area reporting such employment; and the area with the highest proportion was central Michigan, where 54 percent of the families visited had some nonagricultural work.

The isolation of beet workers was a definite handicap in obtaining supplementary work. When poverty was so great that the family had not even a relic of a car the difficulty of locating temporary employment was increased by the lack of means of transportation. When a family did have an old car in which to seek work at some distance from home, the cost of using it was sometimes prohibitive at the wage rates received. One case illustrating this situation, extreme but yet not unusual in the area where it occurred, was reported by a Spanish-speaking family in the Arkansas Valley. The father and four older children went in their car a distance of about 20 miles to pick beans, working 7 hours a day for 2 days. The five together made $4 in the 2 days, used 6 gallons of gasoline costing $1.20, and had only $2.80 left for the labor of the five of them.

TOTAL INCOME

In view of the scarcity of employment supplementary to beet work, the annual money income of families of beet laborers from all sources except relief was usually not much greater than the total amount of beet earnings and was far from sufficient to provide decent support for the vast majority of the families. Half the families interviewed for which the information was available (families in Michigan, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Montana only) had total money incomes of not more than $435 in 1935, and barely a fourth had as much as $750 a year, exclusive of relief (table 24). These figures represent money income and do not include any imputed value of dwellings owned or used rent free or of home-produced foodstuffs. The limited contribution of family income from such nonmoney sources is indicated in the discussion of living conditions. (See pp. 73–79.)

TABLE 24.—*Total yearly money income* [1] *of families of beet laborers from all sources except relief, 6 areas, 1935*

Yearly money income [1]	Families [2]	
	Number	Percent distribution
Total	530	
Income reported	343	100.0
Less than $100	10	2.9
$100, less than $200	54	15.7
$200, less than $300	50	14.6
$300, less than $400	39	11.4
$400, less than $500	46	13.4
$500, less than $600	31	9.0
$600, less than $750	31	9.0
$750, less than $1,000	35	10.2
$1,000, less than $1,500	29	8.5
$1,500 or more	18	5.3
Income not reported	187	
Median	$430	

[1] Period between close of harvest season 1934 and close of harvest season, 1935.
[2] Families in central Michigan, southern Michigan, southern Minnesota, northern Wyoming, southern Montana, and Sidney, Mont.

The variation from area to area in the total income of the families of the beet laborers interviewed reflects area differences previously observed in amount of beet work performed, in wage rates, and in supplementary work and income (table 25). The area of highest annual money income from all sources except relief was southern Michigan. It is interesting to note again that southern Michigan is one of the areas that had the least child labor among children under 14 years of age in families of beet laborers both in 1934 and in 1935.

TABLE 25.—*Total yearly money income [1] of beet laborers of families from all sources except relief, by area, 1935*

Area	Number of families reporting [2]	Percent with total yearly income of—				Median amount
		Less than $200	$200, less than $400	$400, less than $600	$600 or more	
Total (6 areas)	343	19	26	22	33	$430
3 eastern areas	207	16	25	24	35	440
Central Michigan	97	11	23	25	41	520
Southern Michigan	41	3	12	22	63	740
Southern Minnesota	69	32	36	23	9	280
2 Mountain States areas	[3] 136	22	27	21	30	410
Southern Montana	62	32	24	21	23	370
Sidney, Mont	52	19	31	19	31	400

[1] Period between close of harvest season 1934 and close of harvest season 1935.
[2] Includes only families visited after the close of the topping season.
[3] Includes 22 families in northern Wyoming.

The very low plane of living afforded beet laborers by the incomes they received is suggested by their income per family member.

Sixty-seven percent of the beet laborers' families for whom information on money income was reported on a per capita basis received less than $100 per person in the year, exclusive of relief. The amount was $75 or less for 50 percent of the families reporting, and less than $50 for 30 percent. Only 4 percent of the families reporting had $250 or more annual money income per capita, an amount that might be expected to prove sufficient to meet the money cost of providing for the reasonable needs of the families.

RELIEF AND USE OF CREDIT

With incomes so obviously inadequate to provide the necessities of life, many families of beet laborers were found to be supported during part of the year from relief funds. Within the 12-month period ended November 1, 1935, nearly two-thirds of the families interviewed had received either direct or work relief at some time.

The place of relief in the lives of the families of beet laborers is closely related to the wage-payment system for beet labor and the use of store credit.

METHODS OF WAGE PAYMENT

Wages for beet labor were paid usually in two or three installments during the season. In the Mountain States areas the first payment was usually made after the thinning and first hoeing were completed, and it involved a wait on the part of the families of 4 to 7 weeks after they had started work in the fields. Payment for second hoeing was usually made late in the summer. In the eastern areas the first payment was not usually made until all hoeing work was completed, and it involved a wait of 8 to 10 weeks after work was begun in the fields in May. In both regions it was customary to withhold $1 to $2 an acre of the money earned for the summer work until the harvest work was completed, in order to hold the worker to his contract for the performance of the harvest work. Final payment, including harvest earnings and the hold-back was usually made about the middle of November, soon after the harvest work was completed and the yield determined for the acreage worked. However, in the eastern areas final payment was frequently delayed. About one-fifth of the Michigan families, when they were interviewed in December, had not been paid in full for beet labor performed in the 1935 season.

STORE CREDIT

Delayed payment of wages has given rise to the practice common among families of beet laborers of living on store credit through much if not all of the working season, with the inevitable restriction in choice of commodities and in opportunity to buy at the lowest available prices. During the period when the families worked in the fields in the spring of 1935 before the first wage payment, 78 percent of the families reported that they lived on store credit and another 11 percent reported that they lived on relief funds. Only 4 percent reported that they were living on money advanced by the farmer for whom they worked. The few remaining families relied on their own resources or on other types of outside assistance. Usually store credit was advanced to beet laborers only after the family secured its contract for the coming season's beet work and either the grower or the sugar company's representatives helped to arrange credit for the family with or without a formal assignment of wages. Credit thus obtained was extended only

in limited amount. It was not customary for the sugar companies to operate stores, except that commissaries were conducted in a few instances, which dealt only in commodities advanced to beet workers during the period when they could not get store credit elsewhere. The system of store credit reported in one locality was as follows: The storekeeper, who was well acquainted with the beet laborers' families and the farmers' lands and could estimate quite closely what the various families were earning, extended credit, regardless of family size, only to the amount of estimated current earnings. The growers, by arrangement, would make out the pay checks for the laborer's work in both the storekeeper's and the laborer's names. The laborer then necessarily cashed the check at the store and received in change the difference, if any, between the accumulated store bill and the amount of the check. In the Michigan localities visited it was customary for the sugar company to make the payments to the laborers for summer work on assignment from the growers; and therefore store-credit arrangements for the laborers were usually made by the sugar company's field men rather than by the growers themselves. The field man would take the worker to the store, where he handed the worker his pay check, and in this way he assisted the storekeeper to collect what the beet worker owed him.

In most if not all localities a family with relatively high earning capacity and a reputation for permanence and reliability was able to obtain store credit without an assignment of wages or its informal equivalent and could live with the same degree of independence as a farmer on the same economic level; but this situation was not the characteristic one for beet laborers.

In general, the families were able to provide for themselves through the 6-month working season either by credit or by the use of cash. But the end of the working season and the reckoning with the storekeeper that followed the harvest pay day found many beet workers with little or no cash reserve with which to begin the winter and with no work to back store credit. A number of families reported the amount of cash on hand at the end of the 1934 working season after bills accumulated in providing for their day-to-day needs had been met but before they had bought necessary supplies for the winter. Of the families giving this information 38 percent reported that they had no cash on hand after paying such bills, 31 percent had less than $60, and only 26 percent reported having $60 or more; for 4 percent some cash was on hand but the amount was not reported.

RELIEF

It is not surprising, therefore, that by the end of December 1934, 36 percent of all families interviewed were receiving relief, either direct aid or employment on work-relief projects; and that by the end of February 1935, 54 percent had received such help from relief agencies. Altogether 63 percent of the families received relief some time between November 1, 1934, and October 31, 1935, or the date of interview if earlier. The most usual period over which relief was received was 6 months. More than a third of all families reporting whether they received relief during the period of approximately a year had received it in 6 or more calendar months. Relief was somewhat more common among the Spanish-speaking families, of whom

69 percent received relief, than among the Russian-German families, of whom 53 percent received it in this period.

The proportion of the beet workers' families that were on relief at some time during the year in the areas visited ranged from 37 to 97 percent. The highest proportion of families receiving relief, 97 percent, was for the Arkansas Valley in southern Colorado, where average beet acreages worked were small, wage rates for other work were low, and a water shortage had restricted crops the preceding season.

The proportion of families receiving relief in the different areas is shown in table 26. The relationship between prevalence of relief and median yearly income on a family basis in the various areas is apparent, but the proportions shown to be receiving relief sometime during the year reflect also differences in policies of granting relief to beet workers.

TABLE 26.—*Families receiving relief during year ended Oct. 31, 1935, by area*

Area in which family was interviewed	Total	Percent not receiving relief	Percent receiving relief			
			Total	In less than 6 calendar months	In 6 or more calendar months	Number of calendar months not reported
Total	[1] 941	37	63	31	32	
3 eastern areas	231	49	51	29	22	
Central Michigan	114	58	42	25	16	1
Southern Michigan	42	62	38	24	14	
Southern Minnesota	75	28	72	37	35	
7 Mountain States areas	710	33	67	31	36	
Northern Colorado	194	27	73	35	38	
Arkansas Valley, Colo	70	3	97	11	86	
Western Slope, Colo	51	63	37	21	16	
Western Nebraska	100	33	67	40	27	
Northern Wyoming	148	55	45	39	6	
Southern Montana	101	21	79	21	56	2
Sidney, Mont	46	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	

[1] Exclusive of 5 families who did not report whether they received relief.
[2] Percent not shown because number of families was less than 50.

The Western Slope area was conspicuous for the combination of low family income and the small proportion receiving assistance from relief agencies. In this area the emergency-relief administration of one county expected the sugar company of the locality to advance credit to the sugar-beet laborers through the winter against their next season's earnings even for families that did not have prospects of earning enough to provide a bare living for their families during both the summer and winter seasons. The reason advanced for this relief policy was that if relief was generally given to families of beet workers, the long-established custom of the sugar company of advancing credit to the beet workers would be threatened, and the company's sense of responsibility for the families would be lessened. The company did make small advances to many families, but the relief given to them was limited for the most part to clothing for school children. The situation of many of these families was almost desperate. In at least one other area the sugar company advanced

some credit against the next season's earnings to certain workers in the winter of 1934–35. In other areas company credit advances or the guaranteeing of store credit through the winter had been customary in previous years when wage rates were higher and public relief less general but had been discontinued at the time of this study.

The local prejudice in many beet-producing localities against beet workers, particularly the "Mexicans," as both Spanish-Americans and Mexicans were referred to, made it difficult for them to obtain needed relief. It was common for townspeople in the beet-producing localities to feel that "the sugar company brought them in, let the sugar company care for them," and the result was that some beet workers in serious need were left to shift for themselves. The policy of relief administrators regarding the extent to which beet workers should be denied relief on the ground that they were able to get some credit advanced against their next season's earnings differed from locality to locality. For these reasons some families did not obtain relief that they might have received if they had not been beet workers or if they had lived elsewhere. The penniless state of many families not receiving relief during the year is suggested by the fact that more than a fourth of the families not obtaining relief had no cash on hand after the 1934 harvest pay day to start the winter, and nearly another fourth had less than $55. For many families this meant existence on store credit which was even more meager than existence on relief.

In more than one area relief was provided for Mexicans on a different budget basis from that applied to other families, and in one State a different wage rate was paid for common labor on "Mexican" relief projects (25 cents an hour) than was paid on other similar work-relief projects (45 cents an hour). In one important beet-growing county it was reported that the community prejudice against granting beet workers relief on the same basis as white families was so strong that all milk allowances were cut off for Mexican families.

Relief policies in beet-growing areas also affected the migration of families. In Minnesota, for instance, it was reported that families of beet workers had difficulty in obtaining relief in the rural counties where they worked and that they customarily returned each fall to St. Paul or Minneapolis, where relief was generally available.

It was also reported by a number of families that since it was easier to get relief in Colorado and Montana than in Wyoming they were returning to the former States instead of remaining in Wyoming as they might otherwise have done.

LIVING CONDITIONS

At the economic level at which the majority of the families of beet laborers were living, conditions usually associated with extreme poverty were generally found. They lacked proper food, had insufficient clothing and fuel for the cold climates in which they were living, dwelt in overcrowded houses often not even weatherproof, lacked sanitary facilities, and sometimes did not even have pure drinking water. Families often had only light cotton clothing for cold weather, without adequate underwear or wraps to protect them. The suffering caused from a lack of warm clothing in midwinter is suggested by the account of one school teacher in northern Wyoming who told how youngsters, coming to school in zero weather from the Mexican colony, wearing only overalls, had to run as fast as possible in an effort to keep from being thoroughly chilled. The hardships due to poor housing and inadequate food were intensified by the lack of sufficient bed clothing and fuel.

FOOD

Supplying the family with food was the first and ever-present concern of the beet workers' families. Flour and beans appeared to be the most common staples for many families. Sugar, lard, and coffee were also important items of diet. When the families were working in the fields they were more likely to have meat; in fact they found it necessary to increase the quantity and variety of their diet at that time in order to be physically able to stand up under the strain of long hours and hard work. In the winter their diet was more meager. As one grocer explained, "If they do not eat flour, they eat beans." Among the Spanish-speaking families, some ate chiefly Mexican food, largely beans, chili, and tortillas, but many preferred a more American diet. One mother explained that she learned from relief people to eat healthful foods, and when she could afford it she bought milk, eggs, and canned spinach.

Gardens supplemented the food supply to some extent, and the keeping of cows or chickens to a lesser extent. In most areas it was customary for growers to provide beet laborers with a small garden plot, but the plots provided were sometimes very small indeed. Many growers, particularly in the irrigated areas, did not wish to spare enough good land and water to make possible a garden that could yield enough to provide a material part of the family food supply. Families that had all the work they could handle in the beet fields likewise had little time in the spring to spend gardening for themselves.

Altogether, 61 percent of the 919 families reporting stated that the beet grower for whom they worked had offered them some space for a garden (including water for irrigation in areas where this was necessary), and 54 percent had planted gardens on the land offered. However, a few of these families had the misfortune to have their gardens destroyed by flood, drought, or pests. Some families said that un-

certainty whether adequate irrigation water would be available deterred them from investing in seed, which with their limited income was an item to consider.

The tendency to have gardens was greater for the families living on farms during the beet season than for those living elsewhere. Seventy-five percent of families living on farms during the beet season reported that the farmers for whom they worked offered them space in which to have gardens in 1935, and 68 percent reported that they had planted in the places so provided. Only about one-fourth of the families that lived in towns or colonies through the beet season reported that they had had any gardens in places provided by a grower for whom they worked, but at least an equal proportion reported that they managed to have a garden in a place which they provided for themselves or which the sugar company of the locality may have provided for them near the colony in which they lived. Since the families that worked in the beet fields as extra help usually lived in colonies or towns, they were much less likely to have gardens at the farm where they worked than families that had seasonal contracts for beet labor. Only 17 percent of the former group had gardens in space provided for them by growers, in contrast to 63 percent of the latter.

The families when interviewed were found for the most part to be using small quantities of milk. Indeed, 9 percent of the families reported that they used no milk during the week preceding the interview, and in the 91 percent that did use milk the amounts consumed were far below those required by accepted health standards. Allowing the quantity of milk recommended by the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture for an adequate diet at minimum cost,[1] the families included in this study should have used an average of 5⅓ quarts of milk per person in a week. The amounts they actually used were less than a quart per person a week in about one-third of the families reporting amount used, less than 2 quarts per person for nearly two-thirds, and less than 3 quarts per person for four-fifths of the families using any milk. These amounts refer to quantities of fresh milk or the equivalent amount in canned or dried form. The families included in this study tended to use decidedly less milk per person than urban families of wage earners and clerical workers in the United States, of whom about two-fifths used less than 2 quarts of milk per person a week according to the sample study of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics made in 1935 and 1936.[2]

Although milk is a particularly important body-building food for young children, there was found to be little difference between families with children under 6 years of age and those with no children under 6 years of age either in the proportion using any milk at all or in the amounts of milk used. The figures on milk consumption for both of these groups of families appear in table 27.

[1] One quart a day for boys under 7 years and girls under 8, at least 3 cups a day for older boys and girls and for women, and 2 cups a day for men. Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture: Diets at Four Levels of Nutritive Content and Cost, by Hazel K. Stiebeling and Medora M. Ward. Circular No. 296. Washington, 1933.

[2] Testimony of Isador Lubin, United States Commissioner of Labor Statistics, on the Fair Labor Standards Act before the Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. Senate, and the Committee on Labor, House of Representatives, June 7, 1937, p. 324. Washington, 1937.

TABLE 27.—*Amount of milk consumed per person*[1] *by families of beet laborers with and without children under 6 years of age, 1935*

Amount of milk consumed per person[1]	All families		Families with children under 6 years of age		Families with no children under 6 years of age	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	946		647		299	
Consumption reported	925	100.0	636	100.0	289	100.0
No milk used	83	9.0	59	9.3	24	8.3
Milk used	842	91.0	577	90.7	265	91.7
Less than 1 pint	99	10.7	64	10.1	35	12.1
1 pint, less than 1 quart	178	19.3	117	18.4	61	21.1
1 quart, less than 2	224	24.2	155	24.4	69	23.9
2 quarts, less than 3	137	14.8	109	17.1	28	9.7
3 quarts, less than 4	49	5.3	32	5.0	17	5.9
4 quarts or more	103	11.1	70	11.0	33	11.4
Amount not reported	52	5.6	30	4.7	22	7.6
Consumption not reported	21		11		10	

[1] Amounts shown are quantities of fresh milk or equivalent amounts of milk in canned or dried form used during week preceding interview.

The place of residence appeared to have more bearing on the consumption of milk than the presence of children under 6 years of age. Families living in colonies tended to use less milk than those living on farms or those living in towns. Of the families living in colonies when interviewed, 18 percent had used no milk at all in the week preceding the interview and nearly half the families using any milk had consumed less than a quart a week per person or its equivalent. Among the families with low milk consumption, the typical use was 2 or 3 cans of evaporated milk in a week for the family, used in coffee and on breakfast cereal. Even among families living on farms, evaporated or other canned milk was used to the exclusion of fresh milk by half the families using any milk at all. The families using the largest quantities of milk tended to be those possessing a cow or a goat. It was exceptional for the growers to provide their laborers with a cow or the use of a cow, and few of the families could afford to buy one. At the time of interview only 1 out of 8 of all the 940 families reporting was keeping a cow or a goat, and of those living on farms, 1 out of 6.

Some beet workers were able to improve their food supply by keeping poultry, but the families that kept either livestock or poultry were in the minority even among those that lived on farms. Sometimes the farmers objected to having the families keep animals about and sometimes frequent moving made it difficult to keep animals. Poultry was kept by slightly more than two out of five farm families but by less than one out of three town families, and less than one out of four colony families.

HOUSING

Type.

In beet-producing areas, the dwellings of the sugar-beet laborers were usually identified by their bareness and small size. Some were adobe, particularly the houses built in colonies by the sugar companies a number of years ago. The more recently built colony houses were, for the most part, of substantial hollow-tile construction. The houses on farms were rough, frame shacks, often unpainted. In Michigan a wagon, which was one room on wheels, was sometimes provided by the sugar companies for housing beet workers. The better houses used by beet workers living on farms were usually those which the farmers' families had formerly occupied. The houses of beet workers living in towns were less readily distinguishable than those in colonies or the open country and were usually small frame houses similar to workers' houses in small towns anywhere. The homes of the families interviewed seldom had running water or bathrooms.

Leaky roofs, cracks and holes in walls, and general lack of repair were frequently complained of by the families, and representatives of growers and sugar companies were seriously concerned over the bad housing facilities. The prevailing conditions were explained by the representatives of growers and sugar companies as being due to the recent hard times for the sugar-beet farmers and to the impossibility of persuading some of the farmers that they had a responsibility to provide better quarters for their beet laborers. The complete lack of any standards on the part of some growers regarding housing conditions of beet laborers is illustrated by the fact that in one case a family of 10 was given a very small, windowless room in a stable between the horse stalls and the grain room and a small tent to live in. When this family was interviewed on a cold day in early November there was only a small cook stove in the tent and no means of heating the stable room. Quite insanitary but less uncomfortable and inconvenient was the 1-room dugout provided for a family of 10 in the same vicinity. The dugout was a room sunk two-thirds below ground level and banked with soil except for 2 small windows and the door.

The dilapidation and flimsy construction of many beet workers' houses made them very inadequate protection against either the summer heat or the winter cold. Some families lived on the farms all winter in lightly constructed shacks made for summer use only, because they could not afford to pay rent for a house suitable for winter use. These families frequently lined their board shacks with cardboard, newspapers, or magazine pages in an effort to keep out the wind and snow. (See illustration facing this page.)

Overcrowding.

Beet workers' houses were frequently inadequate in size as well as in construction. Forty-seven percent of the families interviewed at their residences were found to be living in quarters of not more than 2 rooms and only 29 percent lived in as many as 4 rooms. Some families shared their few rooms with 1 or 2 other families during the working season. Since the rooms of the typical 2-room shack or adobe house were not more than about 12 feet square there was usually no space for more than 2 beds. The large families would lay mattresses on the floor at night for the children to sleep on, and in the daytime stack these extra mattresses on top of the 1 or 2 bedsteads. It was customary in many families for more than 2 people

Farm Security Administration photograph by Lee.

Family of Mexican beet workers.

New housing for families of beet laborers constructed by a sugar company.

Farm Security Administration photograph by Lee.

Shacks occupied by migratory beet laborers.

to sleep together in 1 bed or on 1 mattress, and this was a particularly trying situation when there was illness in the family. In nearly two-fifths of the families interviewed at their residences there were 3 or more persons to a room, and in two-thirds there were 2 or more to a room. Twenty-five families (4 percent of those reporting) actually had 6 or more persons to a room and a few had 10 persons to a room. There were 3 or more persons to a room in 52 percent of the migratory families interviewed at their beet-season residences, whereas the corresponding proportion for the nonmigratory families was 35 percent.

For the migratory families interviewed at and reporting on their winter dwellings the overcrowding was not so bad as among migratory families interviewed at and reporting on their beet-season dwellings; it was approximately the same for the winter dwellings of migratory families as for the year-round dwellings of the nonmigratory families interviewed. Thirty-six percent of the migratory families reporting on winter dwellings were living with three or more persons to a room, as compared with 52 percent of the migratory families interviewed at their beet-season residences and 35 percent of the nonmigratory families.

In two localities visited the sugar company was building new colony dwellings for beet workers; and while these were of sound construction, those seen completed allowed only two rooms to a family. That many families desired more space than they had was suggested by the additions made to their homes in places where the company had sold them colony houses and by the larger size of house that the families lived in when not restricted to what the farmer or sugar company offered them.

Costs.

It was customary in most localities for workers to be provided with housing free of charge at least during the working season. A clause making provision for free housing for the contract laborer during the beet season was contained in the standard labor-contract forms used. The growers, however, incurred no obligation under the labor contracts to furnish houses for families working as extra help, nor to provide winter housing for any of the beet workers. In no area did all families interviewed receive free housing even during the working season.

The families that were most often provided with free dwellings were those who lived on the farms only during the beet season and had to be attracted there by the offer of free living accommodations. Of the 122 migratory families that reported on their beet-season residence, 93 percent were living in houses provided free of charge, usually by the growers employing them (see appendix table XIII, p. 95).

Free housing during the beet season was much less often provided for the nonmigratory than for the migratory beet workers. Of the 561 nonmigratory families only 56 percent were living in houses furnished free of charge at the time they were interviewed.[3] The nonmigratory families, if permitted to live in houses belonging to the farmer or sugar company the year round, usually did not have to pay rent in the winter if they had not paid it in the summer, but occasionally they paid rent only for the nonworking months. The free housing provided these nonmigratory families was almost as often furnished by the sugar companies as by the growers. Twenty-four percent of the nonmigratory families were receiving free housing

from the sugar companies at the time of interview, while 26 percent were receiving it from the growers, and 6 percent from others. The 44 percent of the nonmigratory families that provided their own living quarters comprised 19 percent owning the houses they lived in and 25 percent renting homes. The system of providing winter or year-round housing for beet workers by the sugar companies, sometimes free of charge and sometimes at a modest rental, has developed as a means of holding the necessary labor supply in the beet areas; for according to sugar-company officials it costs less to provide housing for the workers than to transport them from distant sections every spring.

Free housing was provided during the winter for comparatively few of the migratory families that were interviewed and that reported on their winter dwellings. Of the 242 migratory families that were interviewed in their winter dwellings and that reported on rent and ownership, 20 percent lived in houses provided free by the sugar companies and 5 percent lived in quarters furnished otherwise without cost to them. In no case did the growers provide winter housing for these migratory workers who moved off their farms at the end of the beet season. Twenty-nine percent of them owned the houses in which they lived in the winter, but much the largest group, 46 percent, rented them.

Sanitation and water supply.

Insanitary conditions both inside and outside the houses were prevalent in many beet workers' communities. While some of the families visited had succeeded in making their houses look tidy and even pretty, with vines and flowers on the outside and with cleanliness inside, scarcity of water, poverty, and ramshackle housing were handicaps too great for many of the families to overcome. The one staff worker in the only colony visited that had a neighborhood or settlement house was hoping to get running water and a shower bath installed in the house to help rid the community of impetigo and other filth diseases. The only water supply in the colony of approximately 50 families was two deep wells, each with a hand pump, yet this colony was relatively neat and attractive in comparison with many others.

Convenient access to a free supply of water fit for domestic use was usually, though not always, included with the living accommodations provided for beet workers. The provision in the labor-contract forms that workers' dwellings be near a suitable water supply was carried out in most cases, but there were some departures, especially in certain areas of the Mountain States, where the ground water was very alkaline. Many beet laborers had to pay to have tanks of water hauled from the nearest town or they had to haul all the water they used in their own cars. As one family said, "Oh, no water comes with this house." In one case a family reported that its water was carried by hand from a distance of about 2 miles. The area in which the families had access least often to a free water supply was the Arkansas Valley. About four out of five families interviewed in this area had to pay for water they used, though seven out of every eight were provided with houses free of charge, usually by the sugar companies.

With water costing at least a dollar a month for many of these families, the system of charging for water, added to the inconvenience of hauling, could not help but discourage cleanliness among families unable to buy even needed food. It also resulted in the use of water from irrigation ditches for drinking purposes. Of the families included in the study, 25, or 3 percent of those reporting, obtained all the water they used from the irrigation ditches, while an unknown but probably much larger number used some ditch water for household purposes. In one small Mexican colony all the families took their water from a cistern filled by irrigation water which had flowed over the hard ground used for a yard in front of the houses. This water was allowed to settle and was strained through a piece of cloth before being used in the house, but it was not boiled.

CARE AND HEALTH OF CHILDREN

Children in the beet laborers' families lacked not only proper food, suitable clothing, and decent housing but also the care of their mothers when the mothers worked in the beet fields. The work of mothers offered particular problems of child care when there were one or more children under 6 years of age. In 442 families the mothers were reported to have worked in the beet fields in 1935, and 295 of these mothers had children under 6 years of age. About a fourth of these 295 mothers took their young children to the fields with them. Babies would be left lying at the edge of the field or in the family car, or if old enough to walk would play and wander about with little attention from their busy families. It was reported that a few of the working mothers left their young children at home with no one to watch them, feeling that the children were better off there than unprotected from hot sun or cold weather in the fields. More often the working mothers left the babies and the young children at home in the care of an older child or an elderly person. In nearly a third of the families in which mothers of children under 6 years of age worked in the fields the only caretaker of such children during the absence of the mother was a child, himself under 12 years of age; although in two-fifths of them the caretaker was an older person, often an older child or a grandmother. The unreasonable burdens placed on some children and the inadequacy of the care they could give is illustrated by the case of a little 9-year-old girl who, though seriously lame from infantile paralysis, was left in sole charge of three active younger children, a boy of 6, a girl of 3, and a baby 1½ years of age.

The caretaker of the young children frequently also had housekeeping duties, although sometimes in large families the mother would leave the fields earlier than the other workers in order to prepare dinner for the family. However, the hours spent in the fields even by working mothers with children under 6 years of age were usually very long. Only about one-sixth of these mothers worked in the beet fields for less than 8 hours a day at thinning, for instance, and more than one-third usually spent 12 or more hours a day in field labor during their work at this process.

The Spanish-speaking families were much less likely to have the mothers of young children working in the fields than the Russian-Germans. In 1935, 83 percent of the mothers or other female heads

of the Russian-German families worked in the beet fields, in contrast to 33 percent of the mothers in the Spanish-speaking families. The proportions were similar for the families with children under 6 years of age and for those with only older children.

Illness among children and adults in the families was frequently reported, but often they did not receive the medical care needed. Many families would call and pay a doctor if the emergency seemed great enough to justify the expenditure, but often it seemed impossible for them to get a doctor when they had no money. In numerous localities families reported that they were able to get some free medical service through the relief agency in the winter when they were on relief, but that they could not obtain any when they were off relief and living on store credit. The suffering and worry so caused was great. Mothers went through childbirth without medical care, and children whose parents knew them to be suffering from serious diseases were not receiving badly needed medical service.

POSITION IN THE COMMUNITY

In most if not all of the communities visited the beet workers were isolated from the rest of the population, occupationally, socially, and residentially; consequently they were often looked upon as a distinct and inferior social class. This was true to some extent of all beet workers, regardless of race, though the Mexicans and Spanish-Americans usually appeared to be more isolated than the Russian-Germans, many of whose fellows had already risen from laborer to tenant farmer, or even farm owner. The low social status of beet laborers appeared to be partly due to their willingness to do the arduous, monotonous hand labor of the beet fields at the wages offered and to the poverty and living conditions associated with their occupation. For the most part, American farmers not of Russian-German extraction seemed to consider doing hand labor in their own beet fields as being beneath their dignity.

The feeling against the "Mexicans," as both Spanish-Americans and Mexicans were locally designated, had apparently been definitely increasing during the depression years. When times were good, labor badly needed, and earnings from beet work high enough to support the families the year round, the Spanish-speaking families were comparatively welcome in the beet areas. Under depression conditions, however, they had frequently to be supported during the winter by communities that resented the need to care for the "sugar company's Mexicans." Likewise, willingness of the "Mexicans" to "work for half wages and eat half rations" was seen as a threat to the employment opportunities and living standards of the other wage earners of the community. The resulting increase in anti-Mexican feeling in the community was indicated by statements made by farmers and others who blamed the Mexicans for all economic ills of the community and suggested that many of them had come into the United States illegally and should be shipped back to Mexico. Tangible results of this feeling in certain localities were observed in restrictions on relief, refusals of jobs inside sugar factories to Spanish-speaking workers, and the establishment of special schools for Spanish-speaking children. The Spanish-speaking families usually resented the establishment of special schools for their children, because they considered

it to be race and social discrimination, even though they realized that their children suffered from unfriendly contacts with the town children in the regular schools. In telling why his 6-year-old boy had not yet been sent to the local school, one Mexican parent explained, "We are afraid they [the white children] might hate him, and he is too little [for that]."

The lack of welcome to a community experienced by many beet laborers was often expressed in the failure of their children to take part in the extracurricular activities of the schools. This was true of children in both Russian-German and Spanish-speaking families. Some exceptions did of course occur in certain localities and in the case of exceptionally able children, such as the Mexican girl who played the part of "Miss Spain" in a Christmas entertainment at school.

Hardships and social discrimination have had their effects on the temper of the beet workers but seemed to affect the Russian-German and the other families differently. The reaction of the Russian-Germans to the situation appeared to be an intensifying of their ambition to rise from the class of beet laborer to the farmer class. The reaction of the Spanish-speaking families, who seemed to be more sensitive in temperament than the Russian-Germans, was rather one of seeking "to gain more respect" through raising the level of their occupation, obtaining higher wages, and achieving better living conditions. In several localities visited this desire found expression in an interest in labor organization.

In several of the Mountain States areas visited labor unions composed of Spanish-speaking beet workers were active in the spring of 1935 in presenting the case of the beet laborers to the Secretary of Agriculture in the hearings held prior to the determination of minimum-wage rates for 1935 under the Jones-Costigan Act. A labor union in southern Michigan was the only labor group in the areas visited that had been successful in 1935 in negotiating an agreement with the growers.

CONCLUSION

This picture of family labor in the cultivation and harvesting of the sugar-beet crop of the country reveals a pressure of poverty so great that parents have felt compelled to use the labor of their children in the beet fields in order to handle the maximum acreage of beets and so increase their meager income. The income from the arduous physical toil of the whole family in this seasonal industry is seldom sufficient to provide a decent standard of living, and for many it is not enough to provide even the bare necessities of existence. As a result they must either accept public relief or face absolute destitution during a part of the year. For the children of beet workers, their industrial environment has meant not only heavy labor in the fields but curtailed schooling, inadequate food, poor shelter, lack of proper physical care, and indeed curtailed opportunity in every sense.

This study, concerned with the closely related factors of child labor and low wage levels, points out that in 1935 the highest average family earnings from beet labor were found in an area with relatively little child labor, with high standards of school attendance, and with a trade-union of beet laborers recognized by the growers.

The study records the results of the new method of regulating child labor initiated by the Jones-Costigan amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act, enacted in 1934. This method was to make Government benefits to growers of sugar beets conditional on the observance of certain child-labor standards, specifically, a minimum age of 14 years and an 8-hour day for children between 14 and 16. Until the inauguration of the sugar-beet benefit program, legal restrictions on the employment of children in the sugar-beet industry were almost nonexistent in the United States. The application of the child-labor provisions of this program resulted in a marked reduction in the use of children under 14 years of age among families working under the labor-contract system in 1935. But as indicated by the findings of this study it did not bring about the full compliance with these child-labor standards that was hoped for. This failure is evidently attributable to a number of causes, chief among which was the absence of any definite plan for requiring reliable proof of age for children wishing to work in the beet fields. No provision had been made for the use of employment or age certificates based on documentary evidence of age, a device which has long been recognized in this country as essential in sound administration of child-labor legislation. As a result, misrepresentation of children's ages was frequent. The findings of this study with respect to such misrepresentations offer conclusive evidence that provision for proof of age is fundamental to the effective application of minimum-age standards in this as in any other industry.

If the child-labor provisions of the Sugar Act of 1937, which are substantially the same as those effective in 1935 under the Jones-Costigan Act, are to benefit fully the children and workers for whose advantage they have been provided, it is highly desirable that coop-

erative relationships be worked out with officials of local school systems and State labor and education departments for the issuance of certificates of age for children that wish to work in the beet fields. Such certificates, used as conclusive evidence of the age of a child for the purposes of the administration of the benefit program for sugar-beet growers with respect to the child-labor provisions, would serve as a protective measure not only for the children but for the growers as well.

Another limitation in the administration of the child-labor provisions of the 1935 sugar-beet benefit program was the absence of any effective plan for ascertaining whether children actually did work in violation of the minimum-age and maximum-hour standards of the contracts and for bringing to the attention of administrative officials information on such violations.

Reliance on the complaints of neighbors for knowledge of child-labor violations did not prove to be of much, if of any, use to the administrators of the sugar-beet benefit program. It seems not only useless but also unfair to expect neighbors or even local school officials to report violations, since these are persons whose interests are closely bound up with the industry of the community and who are influenced by a feeling of neighborhood solidarity. Provisions for systematic inspection for child labor rather than reliance on complaints of violation of the child-labor provisions of the contracts is undoubtedly essential if these legal standards for the protection of children are to be more than a moral injunction to be applied according to the conscience of the individual grower or parent.

The children of beet laborers have need, not only for effective administration of the labor provisions of the sugar-beet benefit program but also for opportunities for school attendance unhampered by the demands of beet-field work. A fruitful means of increasing educational opportunities for the children in beet laborers' families and also of lessening the amount of child labor in violation of the standards of the sugar-beet program would be improvement in school-attendance standards in the beet-producing localities. In some sections visited in the course of this study it appeared that beet-processing companies and sugar-beet growers were ready to support higher standards for school attendance during the beet season than those which the school and other local officials had come to believe to be the best that the community would accept. The time appears ripe, therefore, for a greater degree of cooperation in the beet-producing communities between school officials and representatives of the sugar-beet industry in regard to the application of existing standards of compulsory school attendance and indeed, in some States, in regard to the promotion of legislation for higher standards for school attendance.

Freedom from premature toil in the beet fields and improved opportunities of school attendance for the children, together with higher wages, increased work opportunities, and improved living conditions for their families, may be expected to provide for the children of the beet laborers fuller, happier, and healthier lives, and to bring them a position of respect in the communities in which they live. The Federal program of benefits to sugar-beet growers conditioned on the observance of child-labor and wage standards gives hope to the beet laborers that they may achieve these things for themselves and for their children.

APPENDIX I.—Tables

TABLE I.—*Area, factory district, and county in which families were interviewed*

Area	Factory districts visited [1]	Counties visited	Number of families [2]
Eastern beet region:			
Central Michigan	Mount Pleasant, Saginaw, Sebewaing.	Huron, Isabella, Saginaw.	115
Southern Michigan	Blissfield	Lenawee	42
Southern Minnesota	Chaska, Mason City	[3]	75
Mountain States beet region:			
Northern Colorado	Eaton, Fort Lupton, Greeley, Loveland, Windsor.	Weld	193
Arkansas Valley, Colo	Rocky Ford, Sugar City, Swink.	Crowley, Otero	70
Western Slope, Colo	Delta	Delta, Montrose	51
Western Nebraska	Bayard, Gering, Lyman, Minatare, Mitchell, Scottsbluff.	Scottsbluff	102
Northern Wyoming	Lovell, Worland	Big Horn, Park, Washakie.	151
Southern Montana	Billings	Yellowstone	90
Sidney, Mont	Sidney	Richland	57

[1] A factory district is the area from which the sugar beets grown are sent to 1 factory for processing. The factory district usually bears the name of the town in which the factory is located.

[2] Listed in accordance with area in which family worked in the beet fields. In a few cases the family was interviewed in a different area from that in which it had done beet work.

[3] Families were visited in Minneapolis and St. Paul after the beet season had closed. All had worked in various counties of Minnesota, chiefly in the south central part of the State.

TABLE II.—*Migration and place of residence of family, by area*

Area	Total families	Migratory families [1]	Nonmigratory families—			
			Total	Living on farms	Living in colonies	Living in towns
Total	946	385	561	255	175	131
Central Michigan	115	42	73	33	12	28
Southern Michigan	42		42	29	9	4
Southern Minnesota	75	75				
Northern Colorado	193	64	129	39	55	35
Arkansas Valley, Colo	70	8	62	9	44	9
Western Slope, Colo	51	28	23	11	11	1
Western Nebraska	102	53	49	29	13	7
Northern Wyoming	151	63	88	73	6	9
Southern Montana	90	41	49	8	22	19
Sidney, Mont	57	11	46	24	3	19

[1] Almost all these migratory families lived on farms during the working season and in colonies, towns, or cities during the winter.

TABLE III.—*Percentage of working children under 16 years of age in beet laborers' families, by age of child and area, 1934 and 1935*

Area and year	Children 6 and under 16 years of age [1]											
	Total			6 years, under 12			12 years, under 14			14 years, under 16		
	Total	Working at beets		Total	Working at beets		Total	Working at beets		Total	Working at beets	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent [2]		Number	Percent [2]		Number	Percent [2]
All areas:												
1934	[3] 1,722	893	51.9	1,042	294	28.2	368	307	83.4	312	292	93.6
1935	[3] 1,891	642	34.0	1,131	99	8.8	360	181	50.3	400	362	90.5
Central Michigan:												
1934	248	158	63.7	146	60	41.1	54	52	96.3	48	46	----
1935	287	153	53.3	166	47	28.3	57	44	77.2	64	62	96.9
Southern Michigan:												
1934	76	28	36.8	40	4	----	19	11	----	17	13	----
1935	81	23	28.4	41	----	----	18	7	----	22	16	----
Southern Minnesota:												
1934	122	66	54.1	80	31	38.8	24	20	----	18	15	----
1935	134	53	39.6	85	14	16.5	27	20	----	22	19	----
Northern Colorado:												
1934	288	153	53.1	171	50	29.2	63	52	82.5	54	51	94.4
1935	308	87	28.2	183	3	1.6	62	27	43.5	63	57	90.5
Arkansas Valley, Colo.:												
1934	91	30	33.0	52	5	9.6	22	10	----	17	15	----
1935	127	40	31.5	76	8	10.5	27	12	----	24	20	----
Western Slope, Colo.:												
1934	115	64	55.7	73	25	34.2	25	22	----	17	17	----
1935	123	41	33.3	77	8	10.4	19	9	----	27	24	----
Western Nebraska:												
1934	189	118	62.4	114	47	41.2	34	30	----	41	41	----
1935	203	64	31.5	120	4	3.3	37	16	----	46	44	----
Northern Wyoming:												
1934	278	137	49.3	169	38	22.5	62	54	87.1	47	45	----
1935	305	107	35.1	192	14	7.3	50	32	64.0	63	61	96.8
Southern Montana:												
1934	192	71	37.0	129	14	10.9	30	26	----	33	31	----
1935	199	39	19.6	127	----	----	31	6	----	41	33	----
Sidney, Mont.:												
1934	123	68	55.3	68	20	29.4	35	30	----	20	18	----
1935	124	35	28.2	64	1	1.6	32	8	----	28	26	----

[1] Age on June 15. [2] Percent not shown where number of children was less than 50. [3] Excludes 99 children for 1934 and 113 for 1935 whose exact age was not reported.

TABLE IV.—*Percentage working in beet fields of children 6 years and under 16 years of age, by age of child, 1934*

Age of child[1]	Children 6 and under 16 years of age		
	Total	Working in beet fields, 1934	
		Number	Percent
Total	1,821	933	51.2
6 years	180	2	1.1
7 years	166	18	10.8
8 years	184	38	20.7
9 years	179	56	31.3
10 years	175	77	44.0
11 years	158	103	65.2
12 years	172	131	76.2
13 years	196	176	89.8
14 years	173	158	91.3
15 years	139	134	96.4
6 years, under 16 n. o. s	99	40	40.4

[1] Age on June 15, 1934.

TABLE V.—*Progress in school of children 8 and under 16 years of age in each area, 1935*

Area	Children 8 and under 16 years of age [1]														
	Total	Progress reported	Retarded								Normal		Advanced		Progress not reported	Not enrolled nor expected to enroll
			Total		1 year		2 years		3 or more years							
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Total	1,552	1,382	711	51.4	316	22.9	191	13.8	204	14.7	609	44.1	62	4.5	40	130
Central Michigan	237	221	83	37.5	39	17.6	24	10.9	20	9.0	127	57.5	11	5.0	5	11
Southern Michigan	66	57	12	21.1	7	12.3	4	7.0	1	1.8	37	64.9	8	14.0	----	9
Southern Minnesota	105	76	67	88.2	21	27.6	18	23.7	28	36.9	9	11.8	----	----	12	17
Northern Colorado	283	245	114	46.5	55	22.4	35	14.3	24	9.8	120	49.0	11	4.5	14	24
Arkansas Valley, Colo	100	94	72	76.6	22	23.4	15	16.0	35	37.2	21	22.3	1	1.1	1	5
Western Slope, Colo	101	87	70	80.5	29	33.3	17	19.6	24	27.6	16	18.4	1	1.1	2	12
Western Nebraska	151	137	63	46.0	29	21.2	16	11.7	18	13.1	66	48.2	8	5.8	3	11
Northern Wyoming	244	220	125	56.8	59	26.8	32	14.5	34	15.5	91	41.4	4	1.8	3	21
Southern Montana	173	163	80	49.1	37	22.7	25	15.3	18	11.1	70	42.9	13	8.0	----	10
Sidney, Mont	92	82	25	30.5	18	22.0	5	6.1	2	2.4	52	63.4	5	6.1	----	10

[1] Age on Sept. 1, 1935.

TABLE VI.—*Total days worked in beet fields by fathers of families in 3 eastern areas and in 3 Mountain States areas, 1935*

Total days worked by father in 1935 season	Families working in beet fields					
	6 areas		3 eastern areas		3 Mountain States areas [1]	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	530		232		298	
Days worked reported	405	100.0	195	100.0	210	100.0
Less than 20	28	6.9	7	3.6	21	10.0
20, less than 30	31	7.7	7	3.6	24	11.4
30, less than 40	40	9.9	14	7.2	26	12.4
40, less than 50	67	16.5	22	11.3	45	21.4
50, less than 60	60	14.8	19	9.7	41	19.5
60, less than 70	72	17.8	38	19.4	34	16.2
70, less than 80	41	10.1	30	15.4	11	5.2
80, less than 90	36	8.9	30	15.4	6	2.9
90 or more	30	7.4	28	14.4	2	1.0
Days worked not reported	[2] 125		37		88	

[1] Includes northern Wyoming, southern Montana, and Sidney, Mont.
[2] Includes 62 families in which there was no male head or in which the male head of the family did not work at beets, and 63 families visited before the harvest work was completed or for whom the information was not reported.

TABLE VII.—*Usual daily hours worked at each process by father of family, 1935*

Usual daily hours worked [1]	Father of family working at—					
	Thinning		Hoeing		Topping	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	946		946		946	
Hours reported	799	100.0	696	100.0	512	100.0
Less than 8 hours	12	1.5	38	5.5	12	2.3
8 hours	23	2.9	83	11.9	24	4.7
9 hours	44	5.5	102	14.7	47	9.2
10 hours	150	18.8	210	30.2	127	24.8
11 hours	145	18.2	111	15.9	139	27.2
12 hours	196	24.5	94	13.5	82	16.0
13 hours	121	15.1	30	4.3	33	6.4
14 hours	77	9.6	16	2.3	29	5.7
15 hours or more	31	3.9	12	1.7	19	3.7
Hours not reported	19		19		293	
Father did not work at process	83		186		96	
No father in family	45		45		45	

[1] Hours are reported to the nearest whole number.

TABLE VIII.—*Acreage thinned by families of beet laborers in each area, 1934 and 1935*

Acreage thinned by family	All areas				Central Michigan				Southern Michigan			
	1935		1934		1935		1934		1935		1934	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total families	[1] 946		[1] 847		115		96		42		39	
Acreage reported	746	100.0	714	100.0	86	100.0	80	100.0	39	100.0	39	100.0
Less than 10	153	20.5	101	14.2	5	5.8	7	8.7			3	7.7
10, less than 20	266	35.6	234	32.8	27	31.4	19	23.8	7	17.9	9	23.1
20, less than 30	140	18.8	160	22.4	15	17.4	15	18.8	8	20.5	9	23.1
30, less than 40	90	12.1	93	13.0	17	19.8	10	12.5	9	23.1	3	7.7
40, less than 50	49	6.6	68	9.5	11	12.8	15	18.8	6	15.4	10	25.6
50, less than 60	31	4.1	37	5.2	8	9.3	7	8.7	3	7.7	4	10.2
60 or more	17	2.3	21	2.9	3	3.5	7	8.7	6	15.4	1	2.6
Acreage not reported [1]	200		133		29		16		3			
Median acreage thinned	18		21		28		29		36		27	

Acreage thinned by family	Southern Minnesota				Northern Colorado				Arkansas Valley, Colo.		
	1935		1934		1935		1934		1935		1934
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number [2]
Total families	75		72		193		173		70		50
Acreage reported	72	100.0	70	100.0	121	100.0	120	100.0	67	100.0	48
Less than 10	7	9.7	4	5.7	29	24.0	17	14.2	40	59.7	24
10, less than 20	34	47.2	36	51.4	51	42.1	37	30.8	16	23.9	12
20, less than 30	16	22.2	16	22.9	26	21.5	33	27.5	8	11.9	8
30, less than 40	9	12.5	8	11.4	9	7.4	23	19.2	2	3.0	3
40, less than 50	4	5.6	3	4.3	3	2.5	4	3.3			1
50, less than 60	1	1.4	2	2.9	3	2.5	5	4.2	1	1.5	
60 or more	1	1.4	1	1.4			1	.8			
Acreage not reported	3		2		72		53		3		2
Median acreage thinned	17		19		16		21		9		10

Acreage thinned by family	Western Slope, Colorado		Western Nebraska				Northern Wyoming			
	1935	1934	1935		1934		1935		1934	
	Number [2]	Number [2]	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total families	51	48	102		92		151		134	
Acreage reported	46	45	77	100.0	77	100.0	134	100.0	122	100.0
Less than 10	15	14	7	9.0	6	7.8	11	8.2	15	12.3
10, less than 20	16	14	30	39.0	24	31.1	59	44.0	41	33.6
20, less than 30	9	8	14	18.2	16	20.8	27	20.2	25	20.5
30, less than 40	3	3	12	15.6	11	14.3	16	11.9	18	14.7
40, less than 50	2	5	6	7.8	9	11.7	12	9.0	13	10.7
50, less than 60	1	1	5	6.5	8	10.4	7	5.2	6	4.9
60 or more			3	3.9	3	3.9	2	1.5	4	3.3
Acreage not reported	5	3	25		15		17		12	
Median acreage thinned	14	15	21		23		19		22	

[1] Includes 27 families for 1935 and 20 for 1934 that did not work at the thinning process.

[2] Percent distribution not shown when number of families was less than 50 except in southern Michigan, where the families interviewed were the majority of families working at beets.

TABLE VIII.—*Acreage thinned by families of beet laborers in each area, 1934 and 1935*—Continued

Acreage thinned by family	Southern Montana				Sidney, Mont.	
	1935		1934		1935	1934
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number [2]	Number [2]
Total families	90		87		57	56
Acreage reported	63	100.0	71	100.0	41	42
Less than 10	27	42.9	6	8.5	12	5
10, less than 20	14	22.2	25	35.2	12	17
20, less than 30	10	15.9	20	28.2	7	10
30, less than 40	8	12.7	9	12.7	5	5
40, less than 50	1	1.6	5	7.0	4	3
50, less than 60	2	3.1	4	5.6		
60 and over	1	1.6	2	2.8	1	2
Acreage not reported	27		16		16	14
Median acreage thinned	16		22		15	19

[2] Percent distribution not shown when number of families was less than 50 except in southern Michigan where the families interviewed were the majority of families working at beets.

TABLE IX.—*Acreage thinned by families with labor contracts and by those working as extra help, 1935*

Acres thinned by family	Number of families				
	Total	With labor contracts		Working as extra help	
		Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	946	765		181	
Acreage reported	746	617	100.0	129	100.0
Less than 10	153	74	12.0	79	61.2
10, less than 20	266	224	36.3	42	32.6
20, less than 30	140	134	21.7	6	4.7
30, less than 40	90	88	14.3	2	1.5
40, less than 50	49	49	7.9		
50, less than 60	31	31	5.0		
60 or more	17	17	2.8		
Acreage not reported [1]	200	148		52	
Median acreage thinned	18	21		9	

[1] Includes 27 families that did not work at the thinning process.

TABLE X.—*Average number of acres worked per full-time worker in each area at each process, 1935*

Area	Process worked			
	Thinning	First hoeing	Second hoeing	Topping
AVERAGE ACREAGE PER FULL-TIME WORKER[1]				
All areas	7.9	8.6	[2]8.4	9.3
Central Michigan	8.5	9.0	9.0	7.9
Southern Michigan	12.6	12.5	([3])	13.1
Southern Minnesota	8.8	8.7	8.7	----
Northern Colorado	6.7	8.3	8.2	----
Arkansas Valley, Colo	5.3	6.0	5.5	----
Western Slope, Colo	5.3	5.3	5.3	----
Western Nebraska	8.8	9.3	9.4	----
Northern Wyoming	8.3	9.6	9.7	8.8
Southern Montana	6.9	7.1	7.4	----
Sidney, Mont	7.9	8.5	9.0	9.9
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME WORKERS[1]				
All areas	1,485	1,580	1,429	466
Central Michigan	186	234	234	193
Southern Michigan	96	107	----	78
Southern Minnesota	115	118	118	----
Northern Colorado	252	250	242	----
Arkansas Valley, Colo	97	78	73	----
Western Slope, Colo	106	105	105	----
Western Nebraska	157	173	166	----
Northern Wyoming	268	255	242	144
Southern Montana	122	164	159	----
Sidney, Mont	86	96	90	51

[1] Includes only families for whom both number of full-time workers and number of acres worked were reported.
[2] Exclusive of southern Michigan, where no second hoeing was done.
[3] No second hoeing done.

TABLE XI.—*Families hiring extra help and average number hired by family in each area, 1934 and 1935*

Area [1] and year	Families			Average number of persons hired by families that used extra help (maximum hired at any time)
	Total	Hiring extra help		
		Number	Percent	
All areas:				
1935	[2] 918	353	38.5	2.9
1934	[3] 824	267	32.4	2.4
Central Michigan:				
1935	115	39	33.9	2.1
1934	95	24	25.3	2.3
Southern Michigan:				
1935	42	3	7.1	1.3
1934	39			
Southern Minnesota:				
1935	75	23	30.7	2.4
1934	72	15	20.8	1.6
Northern Colorado:				
1935	178	[4] 78	43.8	2.5
1934	161	75	46.6	2.1
Arkansas Valley, Colo.:				
1935	69	[4] 19	27.5	3.4
1934	49	12	([5])	2.1
Western Slope, Colo.:				
1935	51	[4] 8	15.7	1.5
1934	47	10	([5])	2.2
Western Nebraska:				
1935	99	[4] 37	37.4	1.9
1934	89	24	27.0	1.9
Northern Wyoming:				
1935	150	[4] 80	53.3	3.6
1934	132	48	36.4	3.1
Southern Montana:				
1935	84	32	38.1	2.5
1934	85	34	40.0	2.5
Sidney, Mont.:				
1935	55	34	61.8	4.6
1934	55	25	45.5	3.2

[1] Area in which family worked at beets in 1935. In only a few cases did the family work in a different area in 1934 from that in which they worked in 1935.
[2] Excludes 23 families paid on a daily wage basis and 5 other families not reporting on hired help.
[3] Excludes 13 families paid on a daily wage basis and 10 other families not reporting on hired help.
[4] Includes families interviewed before season's work was completed, so that the number with hired help is probably an understatement.
[5] Percent not shown because number of families was less than 50.

TABLE XII.—*Earnings per acre of families working at all beet processes, by area, 1934 and 1935*

Earnings per acre	Families working at all beet processes																	
	6 areas[1]		Central Michigan		Southern Michigan		Southern Minnesota		Northern Wyoming		Southern Montana		Sidney, Mont.		Northern Colorado[2]	Arkansas Valley, Colo.[2]	Western Slope, Colo.[2]	Western Nebraska[2]
	1935	1934	1935	1934	1935	1934	1935	1934	1935	1934	1935	1934	1935	1934	1934	1934	1934	1934
Total	530	484	115	96	42	39	75	72	151	134	90	87	57	56	173	50	48	92
Less than $10		1												1	11	2		3
$10, less than $11	1	3	1	1				1		1					3	1		2
$11, less than $12															7	2		5
$12, less than $13	5	10	5	7				2				1			13	24		3
$13, less than $14	13	14	8	3		1	5	6		2		2			6	4	1	14
$14, less than $15	17	22	13	5			4	12		3		1		1	9	1		10
$15, less than $16	99	92	37	29		2	60	46		2	1	9	1	4	7	1	20	8
$16, less than $17	23	70	23	22		31		1		3		7		6	8		9	4
$17, less than $18	17	35	11	11		1				6	5	5	1	12	7		5	6
$18, less than $19	10	46		5						19	8	12	2	10	45		3	3
$19, less than $20	51	43	2	2	39					21	7	14	3	6	6		1	1
$20, less than $21	8	15		1					1	9	1	4	6	1	3			3
$21, less than $22	26	34							7	19	7	9	12	6	1			
$22, less than $23	12	14							3	13	2		7	1				
$23, less than $24	12	2							8	2	4							
$24, less than $25	6	1							5	1			1					
$25, less than $26	5										1		4					
Not reported	225	82	15	10	3	4	6	4	127	33	54	23	20	8	47	15	9	30

[1] The areas for which both 1934 and 1935 figures are available.
[2] Earnings for 1935 not reported, as families were interviewed before close of topping season.

TABLE XIII.—*Ownership or rental of house in which family lived at time of interview*

Ownership or rental of house	All families		Migratory families interviewed at—				Nonmigratory families	
			Beet-season residence		Winter residence			
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total families	946		123		262		561	
Ownership or rental reported	925	100.0	122	100.0	242	100.0	561	100.0
House furnished free of charge	488	52.8	114	93.4	60	24.8	314	56.0
By grower	253	27.4	107	87.7			146	26.0
By sugar company	185	20.0	3	2.4	48	19.8	134	23.9
By other person	50	5.4	4	3.3	12	5.0	34	6.1
Family paid rent	262	28.3	8	6.6	112	46.3	142	25.3
To grower	19	2.1	5	4.1			14	2.5
To sugar company	39	4.2			10	4.1	29	5.2
To other person	204	22.0	3	2.5	102	42.2	99	17.6
Family owned house	175	18.9			70	28.9	105	18.7
Ownership or rental not reported	21		1		20			

APPENDIX II

Labor Provisions of the Jones-Costigan Act and of the Sugar-Beet Production-Adjustment Contracts Authorized by It

Section 4 of the Jones-Costigan Act [1] amending section 8 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act provides in new section 8a (3) the following:

In order more fully to effectuate the declared policy of this act, as set forth in its declaration of policy, and to insure the equitable division between producers and/or growers and/or the processors of sugar beets or sugarcane of any of the proceeds which may be derived from the growing, processing, and/or marketing of such sugar beets or sugarcane, and the processing, and/or marketing of the products and by-products thereof, all agreements authorized by this act relating to sugar beets, sugarcane, or the products thereof may contain provisions which will limit or regulate child labor and will fix minimum wages for workers or growers employed by the producers and/or processors of sugar beets and/or sugarcane who are parties to such agreements; and the Secretary, upon the request of any producer, or grower, or worker, or of any association of producers, or growers, or workers, or of any processor, of sugar beets or sugarcane, is hereby authorized to adjudicate any dispute as to any of the terms under which sugar beets or sugarcane are grown or are to be grown and/or marketed, and the sugar and byproducts thereof are to be marketed. The decision and any determination of the Secretary shall be final.

The sugar-beet production-adjustment contracts [2] included labor provisions in part I, section 10, as follows:

Labor conditions. To effectuate the policy of section 8 (a) 3 of the act, as amended:

(a) CHILD LABOR.—The producer hereby agrees not to employ nor to suffer nor permit the employment by any other person, directly or indirectly, in the production, cultivation, and/or harvesting of sugar beets on this farm, any child under the age of 14 years, except a member of his own immediate family, whether for gain to such child or any other person; and he agrees not to so employ or permit such employment of a child between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years, inclusive, except a member of his immediate family, for a longer period than eight hours each day.

(b) FIXING OF MINIMUM WAGES.—The Secretary shall have the authority (1) after due notice and opportunity for public hearing at a place accessible to producers and workers involved and (2) on the basis of a fair and equitable division among processors, producers, and workers of proceeds derived from the growing and marketing of sugar beets, and the products thereof, to establish minimum wages for this factory district to be paid by producers to workers and, where necessary, the time and method of payment in connection with the production, cultivation, and/or harvesting of the 1935 and/or the 1936 crops of beets. The producer agrees to abide by the determination of the Secretary when such minimum wages and the time and method of payment have been established.

To insure a fair and equitable division among processors, producers, and workers of the proceeds derived from the growing and marketing of the 1934 crop, the producer hereby agrees to pay promptly or cause to be paid promptly to the workers who work or have worked on this farm, all bona fide claims for wages for said workers, arising in connection with the production, cultivation, and/or harvesting of the 1934 crop, and to provide to the Secretary prior to the time of payment of the final 1934 crop payment under this contract, a certificate to the effect

[1] Public, No. 213, 73d Cong.

[2] Sugar Beet Production Adjustment Contract (Form Sugar 3), Agricultural Adjustment Administration, approved October 16, 1934, p. 2. Washington.

that such claims have been paid. The Secretary shall have the right, in his discretion, to refuse to make the final 1934 crop payment due under this contract, to the producer, unless the producer shall submit additional evidence satisfactory to the Secretary that all of such wages have been paid.

(c) ADJUDICATION OF LABOR DISPUTES.—The producer hereby agrees that he will abide by the decision of the Secretary with respect to any labor dispute involving the producer, in connection with the production, cultivation, and/or harvesting of sugar beets of the producer, when any such dispute has been presented to the Secretary by the producer or any other person and the Secretary has determined to adjudicate such dispute.

APPENDIX III

Form Used for Labor Contract Between Grower and Beet Laborer in the Factory Districts of One Sugar Company

LABOR CONTRACT

Contract for Hand Labor for the Season of 1935

Memorandum of agreement, made this _____ day of _____, 1935, by and between _____ of _____, hereinafter called the grower, and _____ of _____, hereinafter called the contractor.

Witnesseth: Whereas the grower has entered into a contract with _____ Sugar Company (hereinafter called the sugar company), for the growing and sale of sugar beets during the season of 1935, and is desirous of contracting with the contractor for the doing of the hand work on said crop;

Now, therefore, in consideration of the covenants hereinafter set forth it is mutually agreed between the parties hereto as follows, to wit:

1. The contractor hereby agrees to do the hand work on _____ acres, more or less, of said sugar beets planted or to be planted on the _____ quarter of section _____, Twp _____ R _____ W. of _____ P. M., in the county of _____, State of _____, for the season of 1935, in accordance with the rules and conditions printed on the back hereof and made a part of this contract, and the grower agrees to comply with and perform the obligations imposed on him by said rules and conditions.

2. The contractor agrees to receive, and the grower agrees to pay, as full compensation for said work, the following prices, to wit:

For bunching and thinning	$7.50 per acre.
For hoeing	$1.75 per acre.
For weeding or weedings	$1.25 per acre.
For pulling and topping	$0.75 per ton (net) harvested up to, and including, average yield of 12 tons (net) per acre harvested, and 60 cents per ton (net) harvested in excess of average yield of 12 tons (net) per acre harvested.

Payments for said work shall be made by the grower to the contractor, providing the respective classes of work have been approved by the agricultural superintendent or fieldman of the _____ factory of the sugar company, promptly as follows: Payment for bunching and thinning and for hoeing on the completion of the hoeing; payment for weeding or weedings on September 15, 1935, payment for pulling and topping when such work is completed.

It is mutually agreed between the parties hereto that $1 per acre shall be withheld from the payment for bunching and thinning, until after the crop has been harvested, as a guarantee of the faithful performance of the contract entered into by the contractor, if said contract covers the hand labor for the entire season, in connection with the production, cultivation, and harvesting of the beets; it is provided, however, that if the contractor shall cease work before the completion of the contract, through no fault of his own, the contractor shall at the time of ceasing work, be paid in full for all labor actually performed, without any deduction whatever.

The actual average yield in tons (net) per acre shall be determined by dividing the actual tons (net) of beets harvested by the actual number of acres harvested from the herein-described tract or tracts of land.

3. The grower agrees to provide the contractor with a habitable house, suitable water near at hand for drinking and domestic purposes, to haul laborers and baggage from nearest railroad station to farm and to return them on completion of work contracted, and when requested by the fieldman of the sugar company, to provide such house with a suitable stove, all without expense to the contractor.

The grower also agrees to provide the contractor with a suitable garden plot, without expense to the contractor, provided the contractor will make proper use of it and keep it free of weeds.

4. The grower reserves the right to cancel all, or any part of the contract, on such portions of the land, on which the grower, in his judgment, may determine that the beets will not be harvested for sale to the sugar company, provided that full payment is made to the contractor for all work theretofore done by him on such portions of the land.

5. If at the request of the contractor, the grower, at his option, shall advance to, or pay for, or agree to pay for, the account of the contractor any sum or sums of money, or shall guarantee the payment of any bill for provisions or supplies furnished or to be furnished to the contractor by others, or shall advance any moneys earned by extra labor hired for account of the contractor in fulfilling his obligations under this contract, the grower may deduct the amount thereof in any settlement with the contractor under this contract.

6. No assignment of this contract and no partial assignment of any amount due or to become due to the contractor under the terms of this contract shall be valid, or binding upon the grower, unless accepted by the grower.

7. It is hereby mutually agreed that in the event of any misunderstanding or dispute between the parties hereto with respect to the interpretation of any of the provisions of this contract, including said rules and conditions, or as to the amount or character of the work perfomed hereunder or the compensation due therefor, or respecting any claim by either party for failure of the other party to complete this contract, the aforesaid agricultural superintendent or fieldman of the sugar company shall be arbitrator; and if the decision of said arbitrator is not accepted by the parties then and in such event it is agreed that the grower and the contractor will abide by the decision of the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to any labor dispute involving the grower and the contractor in connection with the production, cultivation and/or harvesting of sugar beets of the grower, when any such dispute has been presented to the Secretary of Agriculture by the grower or any other person and the Secretary has determined to adjudicate such dispute.

8. The contractor hereby agrees not to employ nor suffer, nor permit the employment by any other person, directly or indirectly, in the production, cultivation, and/or harvesting of sugar beets on herein described tract or tracts of land, of any child under the age of 14 years, and he agrees not to so employ or permit such employment of a child between the ages of 14 and 16 years, inclusive, for a longer period than 8 hours each day, in violation of the provisions of sugar beet production adjustment contract between the Secretary of Agriculture and the grower.

In witness whereof, the parties hereto have hereunto subscribed their names the day and year first above written.

----------,
Grower.

----------,
Contractor.

Rules and Conditions Governing the Hand Work of the Within Contract

BUNCHING AND THINNING

This operation must be commenced by the contractor just as soon as the beets show four leaves and the grower has them properly cultivated, and must be completed as rapidly as possible in the following manner, to wit: Beets to be spaced 10 inches apart, or wider if so ordered by grower leaving only one plant in each place. If there is no beet 10 inches distant from the last one thinned, a beet should be left in the space 4 to 6 inches from the last one thinned, unless otherwise ordered by grower. No double beets shall be left; in splitting doubles, the stronger plant must be left; care must be used not to hoe away an excessive amount of dirt from the plants left. The grower must keep the crop cultivated so that at least ten inches of the center of the row remains clear of all weeds and foul growth up to the time when the damage done to leaves by cultivator prevents

further use of that implement. The thinning must be done so that the remaining land will be entirely free from weeds.

HOEING

This operation must be commenced by the contractor as soon as the thinning is completed and the grower has again properly cultivated the field, and must be completed as rapidly as possible in the following manner, to wit: By killing and removing all weeds in the land mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and reducing any double plants to single plants by pulling same by hand. In performing this operation the contractor must not work more than two rows at a time.

WEEDING

This operation must be commenced by the contractor when grower orders and must be completed as rapidly as possible. It calls for the contractor's keeping the entire beet field free from weeds until the harvest is started, with the understanding that the grower is obliged to continue the prescribed cultivation until prevented by the damage done to the beet leaves. If it is necessary to go over the field more than once to accomplish that purpose, the contractor agrees to do so without extra pay. If it is not necessary to do any weeding after the hoeing is finished the grower agrees to pay the contractor, who did the hoeing, for the weeding at the rate specified for it. If the use of hoes at time of weeding damages the beets or beet leaves, the contractor must remove weeds by hand.

PULLING AND TOPPING

This operation must be commenced just as soon as the grower begins plowing out his beets and beets must be pulled and topped at the rate required by grower, which rate is to be reasonable. *The beets must be pulled by the contractor, and cleaned of adhering dirt by knocking the beets together, or otherwise, as pulled, and throwing them into piles or windrows at grower's option. No beets shall be piled on top of beets that have not been pulled.*

The beets shall be topped by the contractor in the following manner, to wit: By cutting off the tops squarely just below the crown at the base of the bottom leaf scar, in case of medium or small sized beets; and in case of larger sized beets, by trimming up the crown. Topped beets are to be piled by contractor. The ground on which the beets are to be piled must be leveled down by the grower and cleaned off by the contractor so that the grower may fork the beets into the wagon free from clods, rocks, leaves, or other trash.

All beets left in the field over night must be protected properly from the frost by the contractor by covering the piles with beet tops, the tops to be removed by the grower before beets are loaded.

GENERAL

All tools for hand work shall be furnished by the grower, including hoes not more than 6 inches in width.

All cultivating, irrigating, plowing out, and loading shall be done by the grower.

In the event that the contractor ceases work through fault of his own, or that hand work is not done properly or with sufficient rapidity by the contractor, the grower shall appeal to the aforesaid agricultural superintendent or fieldman, to either of whom authority is hereby delegated to decide whether the employment of additional help is necessary and to permit the engagement by the grower of additional help to do the work in question as cheaply as practicable under existing conditions, if in the judgment of either said agricultural superintendent or fieldman the conditions warrant doing so, and the grower is hereby authorized to deduct the amount paid such additional labor from the account of the contractor.

The fieldman shall, on request, furnish either the contractor or the grower a written statement showing the acreage of the respective classes of work then completed by the contractor.

The grower shall, on request, furnish the contractor a written statement of any charge made to the account of contractor by the grower for moneys advanced, or for guaranties made, or for commodities sold or furnished by the grower, to the contractor. Such statement will set forth the amount of the charge and kind of commodity for which the charge is made.

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